A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy

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A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy

Edited by

Tobias Hoffmann



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Tobias Hoffmann, October 2011

INTRODUCTION

Angels are, so to speak, situated between human beings and God. Like humans, they are rational creatures; like God, they are immaterial. This is what made angels interesting to medieval thinkers, whose treatises on angelology at times exceed in length those of theological and philosophical anthropology. Their motivation was not only to reflect on the role of angels in the history of salvation, as God's messengers and as protectors (or tempters) of human beings. They were also interested, and perhaps more so, in clarifying problems that concerned angels and humans alike. For example, angelology provided an ideal context for discussions about the ontological status of creatures, the characteristics and mechanics of knowledge, the conditions for the exercise of free will, and the supernatural destiny of rational creatures.

The present volume explores the philosophical side of medieval angelology as developed by Christian theologians.[1] As a matter of fact, some of the most famous doctrines of medieval philosophy were developed by discussing angels, such as Anselm of Canterbury's two affections of the will (for self-benefit and for justice), Thomas Aquinas's distinction of essence and *esse* (the act of existence), Duns Scotus's theory of an individual difference (*haecceitas*), and—as Timothy Noone argues in his essay—Scotus's doctrine of intuitive cognition. Literature on these topics tends to mention the angelological background of these doctrines in passing, at best. The emergence itself of these notions or theories from within the context of angelology, however, is something worth studying in its own right.

The idea that there are immaterial beings other than God is not unique to Christian theology. Not only other theological traditions, such as Judaism and Islam, but also pagan philosophers assumed their existence. Apart from God, Aristotle also posited other "separate substances" (that

[1] Angelology also provides an apt context for sorting out theological issues, but these are not discussed here in their own right. For theological perspectives on medieval angelology, see, e.g., Charles Journet, Jacques Maritain, and Philippe de la Trinité, *Le péché de l'ange: peccabilité, nature et surnature* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1961); Barbara Faes de Mottoni and Tiziana Suarez-Nani, "Hiérarchies, miracles et fonction cosmologique des anges au XIIIe siècle," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 114 (2002): 717–51; and Serge-Thomas Bonino, *Les anges et les démons: quatorze leçons de théologie catholique* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2007).

is, bodiless intelligent beings) in order to account for the movement of the heavenly spheres. Neoplatonic thinkers posited angels as mediators between the One and humanity and in order to avoid any gaps in the hierarchy of beings. Accordingly, Christian theologians could assume their existence not only on account of Christian revelation but also on philosophical grounds. Carlos Bazán recently argued, however, that all philosophical arguments for the existence of non-divine separate substances as proposed by ancient or medieval philosophers fail, inasmuch as they are based either upon obsolete astronomical assumptions or upon questionable epistemological premises. He concludes that "[s]ince there are no valid philosophical demonstrations of their existence, separate substances should no longer be a subject of philosophical consideration."[2]

Whatever one might think about the demonstrative force of philosophical arguments for the existence of angels—a topic that will be addressed by Gregory Doolan in the first chapter—Bazán's conclusion that "their notion should be excluded from philosophical discourse"[3] does not follow. Rather, as I hope this volume will show, the notion of angels is eminently illuminating for philosophical reflections.

There are several advantages to discussing philosophical issues in connection with angels. First, taking the situation of angels into account implies transcending the conditions of material reality, allowing us to study creatureliness as such. Thus, angelology provided the medievals with the context for clarifying the act-potency composition of creatures as well as the individuation of substances in general. Second, this perspective simplifies complex issues by reducing the parameters to a minimum, much like classroom physics that calculates acceleration under ideal conditions by ignoring friction. Whether or not one believes in the existence of angels, the hypothesis of purely intellectual beings has a function analogous to contemporary thought experiments that investigate philosophical problems under idealized conditions.[4] For example, angelology was used as the context to discuss the most fundamental presuppositions for intellectual knowledge and to reflect upon the causes of acts of free will.

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[2] B. Carlos Bazán, "On Angels and Human Beings: Did Thomas Aquinas Succeed in Demonstrating the Existence of Angels?" *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 77 (2010): 47–85, at 80.

[3] Bazán, "On Angels and Human Beings," 47.

[4] See Dominik Perler, "Thought Experiments: The Methodological Function of Angels in Late Medieval Epistemology," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), 143–53.

Third, it allows us to go beyond the empirical order and to consider what belongs to the essential core of things, asking questions such as these: Is communication without material signs possible? Is there time where there is no motion, and if so, what is its measure? By ignoring medieval angelology, we would neglect some of the most fascinating medieval debates about metaphysics, natural philosophy, philosophy of mind, and linguistics—debates that are significant far beyond the boundaries of angelology itself.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were particularly fertile in philosophically relevant considerations about angels. In the later decades of the thirteenth century, the discussions of angelology were increasingly freed from the confines of the textbook approach mandated by commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Thinkers turned instead to other forms of delivery, especially the Disputed Questions. Thomas Aquinas's *Quaestiones disputatae de malo* contain a *quaestio* with twelve articles that is entirely devoted to demons. Giles of Rome's *De cognitione angelorum* is a detailed and highly influential treatise on the knowledge of angels. Richard of Middleton dedicates more than two-thirds of his forty-five Disputed Questions to angelology.[5] Other examples could be added to this list. Moreover, in the course of the thirteenth century, Aristotle played an increasing role in treatments of angelology. It was not so much his own view on separate substances that was at issue, but rather above all his natural philosophy (location, time, movement) and psychology (theoretical and practical knowledge) that had to be squared with Christian assumptions about angels. This led to greater philosophical depth and rigor, both in the attempts to incorporate and to refute Aristotle's thought.

The aim of the present volume is to provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the issues scrutinized within angelology, yet one that is narrow enough to give the volume a unified rather than encyclopedic outlook. While Neoplatonists and thinkers from the other Abrahamic religions also made an important contribution to angelology,[6] the volume focuses on a

[5] Richard of Middleton's *Quaestiones disputatae* are being edited by Alain Boureau. One volume has already appeared: Richard de Mediavilla, *Questions disputées*, vol. 4: *Questions 23–31, Les démons*, ed. and trans. Alain Boureau (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011). The proportionally high representation of angelology in the disputed questions is due to the fact that Richard died before he completed the work; but even absolutely speaking, the number of questions pertaining to angelology is remarkable.

[6] Numerous contributions of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim authors, as well as of some pagan Neoplatonic thinkers, are contained in the immense collection of texts edited by Giorgio Agamben and Emanuele Coccia, *Angeli: Ebraismo Cristianesimo Islam* (Vicenza:

relatively unified tradition of authors who dialogued with each other on the basis of a shared scriptural and patristic foundation and who were confronted with similar philosophical challenges. Most essays contained in this volume center on thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Christian authors. An exception is Peter King's chapter, which covers Augustine's and Anselm of Canterbury's accounts of angelic sin. These accounts are not only highly innovative in their own right but also foundational for later discussions of the topic. Renaissance and late scholastic authors are not covered here, although angels still played an important role for these thinkers. The latter, however, entirely abandoned the framework of scholastic discussions, while the former, though they still debated angelology in line with the medieval tradition, mainly expanded on existing theories rather than developing new ones.[7]

The volume builds upon and complements important work on angelology that has been published in the last decade or so. Two important studies by Tiziana Suarez-Nani examine angelic individuation, location and the cosmological function of angels in the universe, focusing on Thomas Aquinas, Thierry of Freiberg, and Giles of Rome. These studies have greatly contributed to the appreciation of the philosophical significance of medieval angelology.[8] A recent anthology by Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz covers a longer period, stretching from the twelfth century to the seventeenth, concentrating on angelic hierarchies, angelic location, and angelic knowledge and language.[9] Also noteworthy is an excellent chapter on angelology in Armand Maurer's book on William of Ockham, covering

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Neri Pozza Editore, 2009). For a concise account of pagan theories of angels, see Clemens Zintzen, "Geister (Dämonen): B. III. c. Hellenistische und kaiserzeitliche Philosophie," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. Theodor Klauser (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1950ff.), 9:640–68, at 652–68. Proclus had an important indirect impact on medieval theories of angelology in that he is the source of Pseudo-Dionysius's highly influential account of the celestial hierarchy. Pseudo-Dionysius distinguished between nine angelic choruses and related them to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. For his medieval reception, see David Luscombe, "The Hierarchies in the Writings of Alan of Lille, William of Auvergne and St Bonaventure," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, 15–28.

[7] See the excellent article by Stephan Meier-Oeser, "Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation Angels: A Comparison," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, 187–200. An example of a late scholastic treatise on angelology is Francisco Suárez' influential *De angelis, Opera omnia*, vol. 2 (Paris: Vivès, 1856).

[8] Tiziana Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie: subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparés à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2002); Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome* (Paris: Vrin, 2002).

[9] Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz, eds., *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance* (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008).

the metaphysical composition and individuation of angels, angelic time, location, and motion, and also angelic knowledge and speech.[10] While the present volume contains some topics represented in all of these studies, namely, angelic knowledge and language, it has a stronger emphasis on metaphysical themes (the demonstrability of angels, angelic composition and individuation) and on action theory (angelic sin), while still giving due attention to angelic knowledge and communication.

* * *

The volume contains nine original essays. The first chapter investigates the question of whether the existence of angels is manifest to us. Some theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, identified the philosophers' non-divine separate substances with the Christian angels. Gregory Doolan studies Aquinas's philosophical arguments for the existence of angels. Doolan takes a unique perspective in asking what kind of demonstrative force Aquinas himself attributed to these arguments. According to Doolan, Aquinas thought that at least some of his own arguments for the existence of angels were demonstrative, rather than merely plausible. The Aristotelian-style argument for the existence of separate substances as movers of the celestial bodies yields for Aquinas only the conclusion that the celestial bodies are moved either directly by God or—for Aquinas more probably—through mediating angels. But, according to Doolan, arguments from the perfection of the universe seem to have demonstrative force for Aquinas. God is free to create or not create a universe, but under the supposition that he does, the order of divine wisdom requires that God create angels, without whom the universe would be incomplete. The sequence "non-rational corporeal substances—rational corporeal substances—God" would contain a gap if there were not, in addition, any incorporeal substances. Again, the perfection of the universe requires that there be a diversity of things, so that if God creates a universe, he will produce diverse creatures: some simple, some composite; some corruptible, some incorruptible. According to Doolan, Aquinas's arguments for the existence of angels reveal his fundamental views about the metaphysical structure of the universe.

Two chapters are concerned with the metaphysical structure of angels. John Wippel examines three theories regarding their composition. The

[10] Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of Its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 339–74.

discussions of this topic were driven by the concern that absolute simplicity and pure actuality are unique to God. Bonaventure thought that in order to protect God's privilege of absolute simplicity, it is necessary to view all creatures, including the angels, as composed of matter and form. Matter is the principle of mutability, of passive potency, and of individuation and limitation. Thus, Bonaventure holds that matter accounts for the angelic ability to undergo change and to be acted upon, and also serves as ground for their individuation and limitation. This "spiritual matter" differs from the matter of corporeal things in that spiritual matter is not extended. Therefore, it can only support spiritual forms. Aquinas rejects spiritual matter in angels on several grounds; for example, he deems matter to be incompatible with their intellectual nature inasmuch as he considered matter an obstacle to the act of understanding. For Aquinas, all creatures are composed of two principles, essence and the act of existing (*esse*), but only corporeal creatures are in addition composed of matter and form. According to Aquinas, the composition of essence and *esse* not only accounts for the exclusivity of God's simplicity; it also explains the uniqueness of God's pure actuality, because the essence of an angel (and of all other creatures) is in potency with respect to the act of existing it receives from God. Only God is identical with *esse* (i.e., only God is *esse subsistens*), while all creatures only participate in *esse*. Godfrey of Fontaines rejected the real distinction between essence and existence in creatures and maintained that they are only conceptually distinct. For angels to differ from the divine pure act and from divine simplicity, one only needs to maintain that they are composed of act and potency. This act-potency composition is not warranted by a composition of an angelic essence with something else, but rather is intrinsic to the angelic essence itself: in the essence of an angel, which coincides with its existence, there is potency together with a deficient degree of actuality. This composition is not a real composition, but a composition of reason, and yet this composition is not the product of the mind that conceives it, but rather belongs to the angel insofar it is more potential than God and more actual than lower things.

Aquinas's rejection of spiritual matter had an important implication for his position on angelic individuation. Giorgio Pini's chapter studies Bonaventure's view (as a representative of a traditional position), Aquinas's view, and the reactions to the Angelic Doctor. The problem of individuation concerns two questions (the first having two aspects): (1) What explains (*a*) the fact that an essence can be instantiated by several individuals that belong to the same kind, and (*b*) the manner in which it is

actually multiplied by several individuals?; and (2) What accounts for the fact that an individual, unlike an essence, cannot be instantiated into further individuals of the same kind? Since Bonaventure considers angels to be composed of spiritual matter and of form, he thinks that angelic essences are individuated in the same way as the essences of corporeal substances, namely, by the angelic form's being conjoined with spiritual matter. Aquinas defends an unprecedented view by holding that the individuation of angelic essences happens in a completely different way than that of material substances. The latter are individuated by the reception of forms in different parcels of matter. But since in his view angels lack matter, it cannot serve as a principle of individuation for angels. Hence he concludes that each angelic essence is individuated by itself, so that there are as many individual angels as there are angelic species, each angelic species being instantiated only once. Pini draws out three controversial implications of this view. First, God cannot create several individual angels that belong to the same species; second, the supposit (i.e., the individual angel) differs from the essence it instantiates only by a conceptual distinction; third, each angelic essence is completely actualized in its single instantiation, whereas in material substances no individual completely actualizes the potential of the essence. Pini outlines the immediate philosophical reactions to these controversial implications of Aquinas's position. The first implication was seen as a threat to divine omnipotence. The second seemed to entail that angels are necessary beings like God. The third had consequences for how one understands the structure of the universe. Without reverting to the hypothesis of angelic individuation by spiritual matter, Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus proposed uniform theories of individuation of all created substances. In their view, the principle of individuation is a property that is added to the essence rather than being included in it. For Henry, it is a twofold negative property, namely, not-being-multiply-instantiated and being-distinct-from-everything-else. In his view, this negative property is obtained when an essence receives actual existence. For Scotus, the property added to the essence is a positive entity.

Medieval angelology also provided the context for highly innovative theories of natural philosophy, as is documented in Richard Cross's chapter on angelic time and motion. Angelic motion implies that angels are successively present in different places; hence to clarify how angels move, Cross's chapter starts with angelic location. According to some, including Aquinas, angels are in a place only inasmuch as they causally interact with the physical world. Angelic motion, then, means that an

angel has successive effects in different places. Merely causal theories of angelic presence were condemned in 1277 by the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier. In order to comply with Tempier, others, for example Duns Scotus, consider angelic presence to be independent of their operations. Although angels lack spatial extension, Scotus thinks they can be somehow contained in a place. For Scotus, angelic motion means that an angel travels through different places, a theory that is at odds with Aristotle's view that spatial indivisibles cannot move. Considerations about angelic duration also prompted the medievals to go beyond the framework of Aristotelian natural philosophy. For the medievals, angelic duration is measured by the *aevum*. According to some, the *aevum*, like eternity, is unextended, instant-like. Thus, it differs from time in that there is no succession of moments. But in their view, although the angelic substance is instantaneous (angels are not generated; they do not grow; they are incorruptible), the angels are not eternal, because they experience succession in some respects and are thus subject to time: not only because their intellections and affections are sequential but also because they move in the physical world. Others thought that the *aevum* is like time composed of periods or intervals; this entails the view that there can be an extended duration without any continuous physical movement. In this respect, however, the *aevum* would differ from time, which is relative to the movement of the heavenly spheres. Theories of the *aevum* as instantaneous duration, according to Cross, view it in metaphysical terms as an account of the persistence of substances, whereas theories of the *aevum* as consisting of periods understand it in physical terms as a kind of absolute time, that is, as a time that is not relative to physical motion.

Angelic knowledge is the subject of two chapters, covering Bonaventure and Aquinas (by Harm Goris) and Duns Scotus (by Timothy Noone). For Aquinas, who rejects the theory of spiritual matter, the intellectual nature of angels raises the question of whether an angel is simply his knowledge. Aquinas denies this and argues that the angel's intellectual substance is its first act, while its actual knowledge is its second act. In discussing angelic knowledge, the medievals generally distinguished between the natural and the supernatural order. Bonaventure's and Aquinas's explanation of angelic natural knowledge is in part inspired by Aristotelian epistemology. Thus, they postulate intelligible species in angels, which are what concepts are in contemporary epistemology, that is, the means by which one understands reality. For the angels the intelligible species are innate rather than obtained through abstraction. Bonaventure, however, allows that angels can also attain knowledge through abstraction as well as by

means of innate species. He posits that angels, like humans, have an agent intellect, because he thinks that a perfection that is granted to a lower creature should not be denied to a higher creature. Additional means of obtaining knowledge are the angel's own essence as well as illumination by higher angels. According to both Bonaventure and Aquinas, the scope of angelic natural knowledge covers material things, other angels, future contingents to the extent that they can be known in their causes, and God as seen in his effects. Supernatural knowledge, in their view, allows the blessed angels to know the divine essence as well as some mysteries of grace.

In Scotus's theory of angelic knowledge, the distinction between abstractive and intuitive knowledge is central. Abstractive knowledge is had by means of intelligible species, whereas intuitive knowledge, which is not mediated by a species, is the direct grasp of something in its actual existence. Contrary to Aquinas, who thinks that higher angels have more potent intelligible species than lower angels, and to Henry of Ghent, who rejects intelligible species and replaces them with an all-encompassing "scientific habit," Scotus argues that all angels require one intelligible species for each knowable universal. Like Bonaventure and Aquinas, Scotus considers the intelligible species to be innate to the angels. In contrast, the angels have self-knowledge through intuitive knowledge. In general, knowledge of singulars and of the existence of contingent things requires intuitive knowledge, because for various reasons innate species are unable to convey knowledge of them. Noone suggests that Scotus's novel and influential theory of intuitive knowledge was inspired by Bonaventure, who holds that knowledge of singulars requires the angels to direct their gaze to the things known rather than knowing them by means of innate species.

The particular mode of angelic knowledge by way of illumination from other angels is dealt with in Bernd Roling's chapter, on angelic speech and communication. Roling focuses on four alternative theories advanced by Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham, as well as on their historical antecedents. Augustine highly influenced later accounts in two respects: first, he developed the theory of a purely mental internal word, which is spoken in thought before it is communicated to others. Second, he was critical of the ability of signs to convey knowledge infallibly. This gives rise to two difficulties, which had already been discussed by Aquinas's older contemporaries: First, how do the mental and the spoken word differ in angels? Second, in case angelic language uses signs, then how are the angels able to decode the signs without using further signs? Aquinas and his forerunners rejected signs as a means of

angelic communication; therefore they had to find an alternative way to differentiate mental from spoken words. For Aquinas, what marks this difference is the speaker's will that orders a mental concept—an intelligible species—to a hearer. The only difference between a communicated concept and one kept private lies in the relation to the addressee which the concept obtains through the speaking angel's will. Giles of Rome is critical of Aquinas's theory and rehabilitates signs as the means of angelic speech. In his view, the speaker's will is insufficient to mark the difference between an internal and an external word, since one and the same internal word (that is, one and the same intelligible species) is the means to convey knowledge of a variety of things. Simply sharing a species with a listener does not provide that listener the precise thought that the speaker wants to communicate. For Giles, angels employ *signa intelligibilia*, which express precisely the speaker's intention and are tailored to the addressee. Duns Scotus again rejects signs as means of angelic communication. According to his theory, angels speak by means of a direct influence on the intellect of the hearer, either by generating in him an act of knowledge, or a species as the medium of knowledge, or both. Contrary to these three theories, William of Ockham simply identifies mental with spoken words. The mental words are of themselves knowable by other angels; therefore whatever an angel thinks is manifest to the hearer. For Ockham, all angelic language, indeed all angelic thought, is therefore public.

The volume concludes with two chapters on angelic sin. This issue highlights the exercise of free will under ideal conditions, for although angels are supremely intelligent creatures that were created without any inclinations to evil, some, according to Christian teaching, sinned while others remained steadfast. Peter King studies the topic in Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury. While earlier patristic authors focused mostly on the nature of angelic sin, Augustine also wonders what caused Lucifer—the highest angel and the first of them to sin—to make an evil choice. For Augustine, Lucifer's sin was pride and envy. His sin of pride consisted in turning his will toward himself and away from God. The cause of the sin is nothing other than Lucifer's will. For Augustine, there is no way of searching for a prior cause that would underlie the evil will, for the nature of sin consists precisely in that it is rooted in an evil will that freely chooses to sin. Although Lucifer's sin is not traceable to an antecedent cause, it is not done without reason. The reason he sinned was love for himself, and the reason the good angels did not sin was love of God. Anselm of Canterbury builds upon Augustine and aims to show that Lucifer meets all the conditions that qualify him as a moral agent. Because he is a moral

agent, he can be held fully responsible for his sin. According to Anselm, a moral agent is neither ignorant of what he should do, nor irrational. Since for Anselm happiness and morality do not necessarily coincide, a rational agent might calculate that an act is to his advantage, although it is immoral. He is free to choose the act because it is advantageous or to reject it because it is immoral. In fact, for Anselm a moral agent has two fundamental motives: a will-for-justice and a will-for-advantage. King sees in Anselm's theory of angelic sin an anticipation of contemporary rational decision theory. Lucifer's sin was a choice made under uncertainty, for he could not know whether God was going to punish him. But he had strong reason to believe that he could sin with impunity. So he weighed the expected utility of the outcomes—sinning vs. not sinning—and concluded it would be advantageous to sin. His sin, then, was fully rational on Lucifer's own terms. Therefore, it meets the criteria for imputability. Yet, despite being rational, the act was immoral, and hence Lucifer was justly punished.

Starting with Aquinas, theories of angelic sin were marked by the influence of Aristotle's account of practical rationality, either because they were attempts to integrate this account as much as possible, or because they were rejections of such attempts. Angelic sin became a test case for whether intellectualist accounts of *liberum arbitrium* (free decision) result in intellectual determinism and whether voluntarism implies irrationality. My own essay studies explanations of the possibility of angelic sin, as well as of the angels' obstinacy in evil after the sinful choice. The problem with an Aristotelian approach to angelic sin is that, in Aristotle's eyes, evildoing requires ignorance of what ought to be done here and now, but the consensus was that the angels were not subject to such ignorance. One solution, first developed by Aquinas, was to claim that the angels were not ignorant about the divine rule about how they should act, but they failed to pay attention to it; thus Aristotle's requirement of some cognitive shortcoming as a condition for evildoing would be upheld. Aquinas's voluntarist opponents argued that in principle sin cannot be traced to any cognitive deficiency. Sin results not from a mere mistake, but from wickedness. Cognitive error, then, does not cause sin, but is rather consequent to sin. The case of the fall of the angels highlights the cognitive and appetitive conditions of a radically free choice between alternative possibilities. Investigating the obstinacy of demons, however, brings to light which factors eliminate alternative possibilities. With regard to the latter problem, Aquinas fully embraces intellectual determinism: after their sin, the angels do not have access to any new knowledge, for only

supernatural knowledge would transcend the scope of what they already know, but by sinning they have forsaken the possibility of receiving supernatural knowledge. Their knowledge is fixed, and because their desire corresponds to their knowledge, their choice is fixed as well. For Scotus and Ockham, the angelic will of itself remains as free after the sin as it was before, and therefore only an external cause can fix their will in its evil choice. Ockham radicalizes Scotus's theory: God himself causes the demons' hatred of God.

* * *

As these summaries suggest, this collection of essays can be read like a survey of medieval philosophy, albeit considered from a particular, uniquely illuminating perspective. The structure of the universe as a whole, the metaphysical texture of creatures, theories of time, knowledge, freedom, and linguistics—many of the most original and ingenious contributions of medieval thought came to light in the context of angelology.

AQUINAS ON THE DEMONSTRABILITY OF ANGELS

Gregory T. Doolan

According to Thomas Aquinas, it belongs to metaphysics to study separate substances—not as its subject matter, but rather as the principles or causes of its subject, which is *ens commune*, or Being-in-general.[1] In considering Thomas's metaphysical account of separate substances, scholars have understandably focused much of their attention on God, in particular examining Thomas's arguments for the existence of God. Significantly less attention has been paid to his arguments for the existence of those other separate substances, which he calls "angels."[2] Not surprisingly, what

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[1] See Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 5.4 co., Editio Leonina (Rome, 1882ff.) 50:154, lines 143–206; and Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio* (hereafter *In Met.*), prooemium, ed. M.-R. Cathala and Raymond M. Spiazzi (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1964), 1. Regarding Thomas's position on the subject matter of metaphysics, see Siegfried Neumann, *Gegenstand und Methode der theoretischen Wissenschaften nach Thomas von Aquin aufgrund der Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 41/2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1965), 7–20; James C. Doig, "Science première et science universelle dans le 'Commentaire de la métaphysique' de saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 63 (1965): 41–96; Doig, *Aquinas on Metaphysics: A Historico-Doctrinal Study of the Commentary on the Metaphysics* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972), 55–94; James R. Counahan, "The Quest for Metaphysics," *The Thomist* 33 (1969): 519–72; John F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 55–67; Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 3–22; Ralph McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 210–18; Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "What Does It Mean to Study Being 'as Being'?" in *Form and Being: Studies in Thomistic Metaphysics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 13–34; and Albert Zimmermann, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert*, rev. ed. (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 200–23.

[2] For some considerations of these arguments, see Paul Zammit, "De existentia substantiarum intellectualium," *Angelicum* 10 (1933): 513–23; James D. Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 16–41; Étienne Gilson, *Thomism: The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, 6th ed., trans. Laurence K. Shook and Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002), 189–93; Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, rev. ed., trans. Gerald Bernard Phelan (1937; repr. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 234–36;

little attention that has been paid to these arguments has focused on their philosophical strength. In the terms of the medievals, scholars have asked whether these arguments are "demonstrative," apodictically concluding to the existence of angels; or whether they are merely "probable," showing merely the plausibility of this conclusion without certainty.

The general consensus among scholars is that these arguments are not in fact demonstrative, a view with which I am sympathetic.[3] What I have found curious, however, is that most of these scholars have been so quick to judge the strength of Thomas's arguments that they have neglected to consider a more basic question: namely, what Thomas himself considers the strength of his own arguments to be.[4] It is this interpretive question

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Joseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1985), 330–31; Oliva Blanchette, *The Perfection of the Universe According to Aquinas* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 275–80; Tiziana Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie: subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparées à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 27–35; Serge-Thomas Bonino, *Les anges et les démons: quatorze leçons de théologie catholique* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2007), 77–92; and, most recently, B. Carlos Bazán, "On Angels and Human Beings: Did Thomas Aquinas Succeed in Demonstrating the Existence of Angels?" *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 77 (2010): 47–85.

[3] The most critical scholar of Thomas's arguments is Bazán, who dismisses all of them either as based upon an outdated Aristotelian astronomy, or as theological arguments "whose consistency and logical value are put into question" ("On Angels and Human Beings," 47). Although I am sympathetic with some of Bazán's logical critiques of these arguments, I disagree with his assessment that any are intended as theological arguments; moreover, I disagree with his ultimate conclusion that "Since there are no philosophical proofs that separate substances exist, their notion should be excluded from philosophical discourse" (ibid.). In contrast to Bazán, both Maritain (*Degrees of Knowledge*, 234) and Owens (*Christian Metaphysics,* 330 note 1) take a more sanguine view, identifying some of Thomas's arguments as possessing a high degree of probability, but both hold that the existence of angels is not demonstrable. Collins concludes that no single argument offered by Thomas is absolutely demonstrative on its own, but notes that all of his arguments can be taken together as a single comprehensive proof. In this way, Collins maintains, they are "sufficient to establish rationally the existence of angels for a mind [such as Thomas's] that was imbued with the hierarchical view of reality and that was fortified by the deliverances of Christian revelation" (*Philosophy of the Angels*, 39). Gilson takes a stronger view, noting that "angels are creatures whose existence can be demonstrated. In certain exceptional cases they have even been seen. To disregard them destroys the balance of the universe considered as a whole" (*Thomism*, 189, 192–93).

[4] Zammit concludes that some of Thomas's arguments are intended to be demonstrative and succeed at being so ("De existentia substantiarum intellectualium," 523). Presumably, Gilson thinks that Thomas himself intends some of his arguments to be demonstrations, though he does not say so explicitly (*Thomism*, 189, 192–93). More recently, Blanchette has noted that some of Thomas's arguments are "proposed as universally valid" (*Perfection of the Universe*, 280); Suarez-Nani has emphasized that these arguments are intended to show the necessity of the reality of angels (*Les anges et la philosophie*, 29); by contrast, Bazán maintains that none of Thomas's arguments are intended to be philosophically demonstrative ("On Angels and Human Beings," 47, 49, 56–59, 79–80).

that I wish to answer here. As I will show, the answer to this question is of interest not only from an historical standpoint, but also from a philosophical one. For it reveals some fundamental aspects of Thomas's metaphysical views regarding the structure of the universe.

My consideration of this topic will consist of five parts. The first will provide some textual background on Thomas's views regarding the demonstrability of the existence of angels. To further clarify his views, the second part will briefly compare them with those of two of his contemporaries, Robert Kilwardby and Albert the Great. The third part will then focus on Thomas's arguments that reason from the perfection of the universe to the existence of angels. In light of these arguments, the fourth part will examine whether Thomas thinks that angels were necessarily created. Finally, the fifth part will offer some concluding thoughts regarding the probative force of his arguments and what it implies for his broader view of the metaphysical structure of the universe.

1. *Textual Background*

Thomas offers philosophical considerations of the angels in all of his major systematic works and in several of his lesser ones, but his most detailed arguments for their existence appear in three works: the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the *Summa theologiae*, and the *De spiritualibus creaturis*.[5] In the first two works, Thomas also offers arguments for the existence of God, but his methodology in treating God's existence differs in some significant respects from his methodology regarding the angels. Before offering arguments for God's existence, Thomas first addresses whether it is even demonstrable—in other words, whether his existence can be proven apodictically.[6] By contrast, Thomas does not address the demonstrability of the existence of angels. The mere absence of this consideration, however,

[5] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.91 nn. 1772–82, ed. C. Pera, P. Marc, and P. Caramello (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1961), 2:260a–262a; Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.1 co., Editio Leonina 5:3–4; Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 co., Editio Leonina 24/2:58–62, lines 119–258. I hesitate to call any of these texts *ex professo* treatments because in none of them does Thomas explicitly ask whether angels exist. Rather, in *Summa contra Gentiles* 2, he addresses whether some intellectual substances exist that are in no way united to bodies; in *Prima Pars* he examines whether angels are entirely incorporeal; and in *De spiritualibus creaturis* he asks whether any created spiritual substance is not united to a body.

[6] See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.2.2 co., Editio Leonina 4:30; *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.12 nn. 72–80, ed. Marietti, 2:15a–16a.

should not be interpreted as a denial of demonstrability. If we consider his broader philosophical and theological project, more is at stake for Thomas in establishing the demonstrability of God's existence than there is for his establishing the demonstrability of the existence of angels. Still, the absence of such a consideration makes it difficult for us to determine whether he views the existence of angels to be demonstrable, much less whether he considers any of his arguments to be demonstrations.

Thomas does, however, provide us with a few explicit observations regarding prior philosophers' arguments about angels. In Book II of his early Commentary on the *Sentences* (1252–1256), he examines in one article the number of angels that exist. Thomas explains that human reason falls short in knowing these separate substances because of their transcendent natures, even though they are most knowable in themselves. "And therefore," he notes, "the philosophers have said nothing, as it were, demonstratively (*demonstrative*) about them and few things with probability (*probabiliter*). And this is evidenced in the diversity among them in determining the number of angels."[7] It should be noted that Thomas's pessimism here regarding demonstrative arguments about the angels is focused on the inability of human reason to say what they are, that is, to speak about their natures. In his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate*, written shortly thereafter (1257–1259), he expresses a somewhat more optimistic view regarding the ability of human reason to discern at least the fact *that* angels exist. In the course of examining the division and methods of the sciences, Thomas addresses the way in which separate substances are studied by the philosopher, noting that

> The quiddity of separate substances cannot be known through those things that are grasped by the senses . . . although through sensible things we can come to know that the aforementioned substances exist and know some of their conditions. Therefore by no speculative science can we know about a separate substance *what it is* (*quid est*), although through the speculative

[7] Thomas Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.3 co., ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 2:92–93: "Ratio humana deficit a cognitione substantiarum separatarum, quae tamen sunt notissima naturae, ad quae intellectus noster se habet sicut oculus noctuae ad lumen solis, ut dicitur in 2 metaphys.; et ideo dicitur in 11 de animalibus, quod de eis valde pauca scire possumus per rationem; quamvis illud quod de eis est scitum est valde delectabile et amatum. Et ideo philosophi de illis nihil quasi demonstrative, et pauca probabiliter dixerunt: et hoc ostendit eorum diversitas in ponendo numerum Angelorum." All translations from the Latin are my own.

Dating of Thomas's texts follows Jean-Pierre Torrell's *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1: *The Person and His Work*, rev. ed., trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

> sciences we can know *that* they exist (*ipsas esse*) and some of their characteristics, namely, that they are intellectual, incorruptible, and the like.[8]

In this early work, then, Thomas expresses a confidence that scientific knowledge can establish the existence of separate substances, implying in his plural usage of the term that he is referring not only to God but to the angels as well. Nevertheless, he does not offer any such arguments here, so we must look to other texts to see how he thinks we can reach this conclusion.

Of the three texts mentioned above that offer detailed arguments for the existence of angels, the earliest is the *Summa contra Gentiles* (1259–1265). In Book II, c. 91, Thomas considers whether any intellectual substances exist that are not united to bodies.[9] There, he runs through eight brief arguments to show that these beings do indeed exist.[10] Unfortunately, he offers no clear indication which of these arguments, if any, he considers to be demonstrative. Adding to the uncertainty of this question is Thomas's statement at the start of the *Summa contra Gentiles* that in the effort to convince his adversaries of the truth, his method of procedure in this work will entail presenting both demonstrative *and* probable arguments.[11] The *Summa contra Gentiles*, therefore, does not adequately reveal the probative force that Thomas assigns to any one of his arguments for the existence of angels. In the later *De spiritualibus creaturis* (1267–1268), however, we begin to get a clearer picture of Thomas's thoughts on this topic—not because he explicitly identifies the probative force of his arguments, but because he contrasts what he sees as suitable arguments with

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[8] Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 6.4 co., Editio Leonina 50:170, lines 136–46: "Quiditas autem substantiarum separatarum non potest cognosci per ea que a sensibus accipimus, ut ex predictis patet; quamuis per sensibilia possimus deuenire ad cognoscendum predictas substantias esse, et aliquas earum conditiones; et ideo per nullam scientiam speculatiuam potest sciri de aliqua substantia separata quid est, quamuis per scientias speculatiuas possimus scire ipsas esse, et aliquas earum conditiones, utpote quod sunt intellectuales, incorruptibiles, et huiusmodi.." Cf. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.41 nn. 2181–86, ed. Marietti, 3:47b–49b.

[9] Thomas had already presented arguments in *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.46 nn. 389–94, ed. Marietti, 2:59a–b, to show that the perfection of the universe requires the existence of some intellectual natures, which he then proceeds to show are incorporeal in 2.49 nn. 1247–58, ed. Marietti, 2:169b–171a, and immaterial in 2.50 nn. 1259–67, ed. Marietti, 2:171a–172a. These chapters precede Thomas's consideration of the human soul, and their arguments are not specifically concerned with proving the existence of separate substances. Bazán offers detailed critiques of the arguments in *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.46 ("On Angels and Human Beings," 58–60).

[10] For a detailed presentation and analysis of these arguments, see Bazán, "On Angels and Human Beings," 60–71.

[11] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.9 nn. 51–58, ed. Marietti, 2:12a–b.

those that he finds lacking. Consequently, in what follows I will focus my attention principally on Thomas's arguments from the *De spiritualibus creaturis*.[12]

The advantage of focusing on this work is that it presents Thomas's most systematic treatment of the subject: rather than simply listing numerous arguments as he does in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Thomas begins with a brief history of philosophical thought on the topic and then explicitly identifies three arguments that he considers to be of particular merit. These arguments are presented in article 5, which considers whether any created spiritual substance exists that is not united to a body. In his response, Thomas first notes that our knowledge begins with sensation, which concerns corporeal things. So, in the beginning, men who sought the truth were only able to grasp corporeal nature, which is why the first natural philosophers thought that nothing exists except bodies. Later philosophers were able to transcend corporeal substances by reasoning through the intellect to arrive at a knowledge of incorporeal ones. Thomas tells us that the first of these thinkers was Anaxagoras, who held that, from the beginning, all corporeal things were mixed together. That is why he found it necessary to posit above them some *incorporeal* thing that is itself unmixed but that moves and separates everything corporeal. And Anaxagoras called this higher being "Intellect" (*Intellectus*). In this way, he reasoned to the existence of a separate substance. But he only reasoned to the existence of one such substance, and not the sort that we would term an angel. Rather, Thomas explains, Anaxagoras's intellectual mover is what we would call "God."[13]

Thomas next notes that Plato reasons in a different way to the existence of incorporeal substances. According to him, prior to every being that participates, there must be some abstract being that is participated. If we consider sensible bodies, we find that they participate in what is predicated of them, namely, in natural species, genera, and other things that are universally predicated of bodies. So, Plato posited the existence of natures that are abstracted from sensible things and that subsist through themselves (*per se subsistentes*). Thomas tells us that he called these natures "separate substances" (*substantiae separatae*). Unlike Anaxagoras,

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[12] In considering Thomas's arguments for the existence of angels, Blanchette also highlights this text (*Perfection of the Universe*, 275–79), as does Collins, although the latter author also briefly addresses the arguments from *Summa contra Gentiles* 2 (*Philosophy of the Angels*, 16–41).

[13] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 co., Editio Leonina 24/2:58–59, lines 119–40.

Plato concluded that more than one such being existed, since he held that there are as many separate substances as there are abstractions.[14]

Finally, Thomas explains that Aristotle employed a third approach to prove the existence of separate substances, namely, from the motions of the celestial bodies. According to Aristotle, celestial motion is uniform, and its uniformity has always been preserved. As with other motions, it is for some end: something on account of which the motion takes place. Now, if the end of celestial motion were itself something moved, then celestial motion would not always be uniform. But according to Aristotle it is in fact uniform and, moreover, is perpetually so. Therefore, its end must itself be a mover that is entirely unmoved. This unmoved mover, however, could not be a body or anything in a body, because any bodily thing is mobile in some way. Thus, Aristotle concluded that the end of celestial motion must be some substance that is entirely separated from a body. Next, observing that there are in fact several such celestial motions, Aristotle concluded further that there must be just as many separate substances to account for all of these motions.[15]

Looking at the arguments of these three philosophers, Thomas concludes that "these ways are not very suitable for us (*non sunt multum nobis accommodae*), since we do not assert with Anaxagoras the mixture of sensible things, nor with Plato the abstraction of universals, nor with Aristotle the perpetuity of motion. Hence we must proceed by other ways to show the proposition at hand."[16] It is worth asking here to whom Thomas is referring when he says these arguments are not very suitable "for us." Presumably, the reference is not simply to "us" as Christians but also to "us" as philosophers. This reading is confirmed by the "suitable" arguments that Thomas then proceeds to offer, since, as we will see, all are philosophical in nature.[17]

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[14] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 co., Editio Leonina 24/2:59–60, lines 140–49.

[15] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 co., Editio Leonina 24/2:60, lines 149–67.

[16] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 co., Editio Leonina 24/2:61, lines 188–94: "Set iste uie non sunt multum nobis accommode, quia neque ponimus mixtionem sensibilium cum Anaxagora neque abstractionem uniuersalium cum Platone neque perpetuitatem motus cum Aristotile: unde oportet nos aliis uiis procedere ad manifestationem propositi."

[17] By contrast, Bazán reads these three arguments as theological in nature, in part because Thomas contrasts them with the arguments of earlier philosophers and in part because they are influenced by the thought of Pseudo-Dionysius ("On Angels and Human Beings," 56–58; 73–76). I do not find Bazán's interpretation convincing here. As to his former point, I think that Thomas's dissatisfaction with the philosophical arguments of Anaxagoras, Plato, and Aristotle does not in itself indicate that his alternative arguments

Before proceeding to Thomas's preferred arguments, it is worthwhile to consider in some detail his criticism of Aristotle's argument, which might come as some surprise. Although Thomas differs with Aristotle regarding the perpetuity of celestial motion and the eternality of the world, he does agree with the Philosopher's position that the heavens are moved by separate substances. Moreover, in Thomas's treatment of the angels in *Summa contra Gentiles* II, this same Aristotelian argument is one of the arguments he employs to prove their existence. Citing the Philosopher directly, Thomas simply adjusts the argument by removing the description of celestial motion as perpetual. He speaks of it, instead, as continuous (*continuus*), regular (*regularis*), and unfailing (*indeficiens*).[18] It is these traits that he sees as requiring an immaterial mover. Thomas makes the same adjustment to Aristotle's argument again in the later *De substantiis separatis* (1271).[19] Since he does make this adjustment in works written both prior to and following *De spiritualibus creaturis*, we might ask why he does not simply do the same in that work to make the argument, in his terms, "suitable for us." One possible explanation is that he considers even the adjusted version of this argument to be lacking in some respect. To see if this is indeed the case, we need to depart from our analysis of this text in *De spiritualibus creaturis* to examine another text where Thomas considers the angels, namely, his *Responsio de 43 articulis*.

In his *Responsio de 43 articulis* (1271), Thomas provides his expert opinion to a list of forty-three questions posed to him by John of Vercelli, Master General of the Order of Preachers. Vercelli had requested responses on these questions not only from Thomas but also from two other Dominican Masters in theology, Robert Kilwardby and Albert the Great.[20] The respondents were to independently answer them by determining the following: (1) whether the accepted authorities (*Sancti*) would be in agreement with

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are theological in character; as to Bazán's latter point, I think it is noteworthy that even though Thomas viewed Pseudo-Dionysius as vested with quasi-apostolic authority, it is not that author's theological teachings that inform Thomas's arguments here but, rather, Pseudo-Dionysius's Neoplatonic philosophy.

[18] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.91 n. 1780, ed. Marietti, 2:261b–262a.

[19] Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* 2, Editio Leonina 40:D 46, lines 197–212. In this text, Thomas notes that we can adjust the argument by reasoning from the *uniformity* of celestial motion (*ex motus uniformitate*).

[20] Regarding Thomas's own response, Torrell notes that it is "dated with precision to Holy Thursday, 2 April 1271 . . ." (Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:354). For an excellent analysis of the answers of all three respondents and for background on the discovery and publication in the twentieth century of their various replies, see James A. Weisheipl, "Celestial Movers in Medieval Physics," *The Thomist* 24 (1961): 286–326.

the positions contained in these questions; (2) whether, prescinding from the views of these authorities, the respondent himself was in agreement with these positions; (3) whether, prescinding from the respondent's own views, these positions could be tolerated by the faith.[21]

Of the forty-three questions presented to the respondents, the first five are of most interest for our considerations:

(1) Whether God moves any body immediately;
(2) Whether everything that is naturally moved is moved by the ministration of angels through their moving the celestial bodies;
(3) Whether the angels are movers of the celestial bodies;
(4) Whether it has been infallibly proven by anyone that angels are the movers of the celestial bodies; and
(5) Supposing that God is not the immediate mover of those bodies, whether it is infallibly proven that the angels are the movers of the celestial bodies.

In response to the last of these questions, Thomas's conclusion is no different from that of the other respondents: it is impossible to prove infallibly that the angels are the movers of the celestial bodies. Still, even though the three respondents are in general agreement about this conclusion, each arrives at it for a different reason. A brief comparison of their various responses will provide us with a clearer sense not only of how they differ but also of Thomas's own views regarding the Aristotelian line of reasoning for proving the existence of angels.[22]

2. *Kilwardby, Albert, and Thomas*

Looking at Robert Kilwardby's responses to these five questions, we find answers that in some respects are more akin to the views of modern physics than to the Aristotelianism of the scholastic period.[23] In his response to

[21] Thomas Aquinas, *Responsio de 43 articulis*, prologus, Editio Leonina 42:327, lines 9–14.

[22] For a more detailed consideration of Kilwardby's and Albert's answers, see Weisheipl, "Celestial Movers," 286–326.

[23] Commenting on Kilwardby's responses, Weisheipl notes that "he had been a Master in Theology of Oxford about fifteen years when he was asked to reply to the questionnaire of John of Vercelli. We cannot be certain that Kilwardby always maintained the views presented in the reply of 1271, but we can be certain of his views at that date" (Weisheipl, "Celestial Movers," 312).

question 1, Kilwardby rejects not only the position that God is the immediate mover of the first celestial body but even the position that God is the immediate mover of any body by continual locomotion. God can only be said to move a body immediately if we mean by the term "motion" a certain supernatural change, namely, when a body is changed instantaneously so that it begins to exist through a supernatural action.[24] In his response to question 2, Kilwardby discusses in what sense the celestial bodies can be said to cause the motion of terrestrial bodies.[25] He notes that there are three opinions regarding the rotational motion of the celestial bodies. The first he attributes to Aristotle and certain other philosophers, namely, that the celestial bodies are animated. According to their opinion, Kilwardby explains, these bodies possess not only animal life but also intelligence by which they know the will of God. Knowing his will, they fulfill it by local movement, and this motion conserves terrestrial bodies, their generation, and their natures. The second opinion is that the celestial bodies are moved and governed by angelic spirits, but not in such a way that these angelic movers are the act or form of these bodies. The third opinion is that the celestial bodies are moved in circular locomotion, not by any external mover but in the same way that heavy and light bodies naturally move, by their own internal inclinations and forces (*ponderibus*). These inclinations were given to the celestial bodies by God, but by means of them those bodies move naturally, each according to its own internal inclination. Thus, according to this opinion, the celestial bodies need neither a separate mover (such as God, an angel, or an intelligence) nor even a conjoined mover (such as a soul).[26]

Regarding these three opinions, Kilwardby considers the first to be philosophically sound because the celestial bodies appear to be more noble than terrestrial living bodies and so would have a more noble life. By contrast, he considers the second opinion to be unsound philosophically, adding "nor do I recall that it is approved by any of the *Sancti* as

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[24] Robert Kilwardby, *De 43 questionibus* 1, in H.-F. Dondaine, ed., "Le *De 43 questionibus* de Robert Kilwardby," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 47 (1977): 5–50, at 10–12.

[25] Kilwardby concludes that the rotational motion of the celestial bodies does not directly or properly cause the motion of terrestrial bodies. He does, however, identify a second kind of motion of the celestial bodies whereby they emanate a form of energy and light rays which, he concludes, do directly affect terrestrial bodies. Regarding these influences of the celestial bodies, see Kilwardby, *De 43 questionibus* 2, pp. 12–13; and Weisheipl, "Celestial Movers," 313–14.

[26] Kilwardby, *De 43 questionibus* 2, pp. 14–15.

true and certain."[27] Kilwardby considers the third opinion, like the first, to be philosophically sound. Moreover, he advances this opinion as his own because he thinks that it provides a sufficient account of the rotational motion of the heavens.[28] Thus, in his response to question 3, which explicitly asks whether the angels are the movers of the celestial bodies, Kilwardby notes that this question has already been satisfactorily answered: such bodies are moved not by any spirits but by the motivation of their proper forces. And even if, for the sake of argument, they were moved by some spirits, those spirits would be the acts or souls of the celestial bodies, not angels.[29]

Question 4 asks whether anyone has infallibly proven that the angels are the movers of the celestial bodies. Given Kilwardby's responses to the prior questions, he begins this one with a single word: "No." The diversity of reasonable opinions on this matter, he explains, indicates that no one has offered a demonstration of this point. Moreover, this diversity indicates that no one can infallibly prove it. Kilwardby acknowledges that both Plato and Aristotle offer reasonable (i.e., probable) arguments to show that the celestial bodies are animated by intellectual spirits. They think their arguments are demonstrative, but Kilwardby notes that the Christian position is contrary to theirs; hence, he concludes that their arguments cannot possibly be demonstrative. And even if they were, these supposed spiritual movers are not what Christians refer to when they speak of angels anyway.[30] Thus, Kilwardby concludes in question 5 that "in no way does it follow that if God does not immediately move those [celestial] bodies that angels move them . . ."[31]

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Turning to Albert's replies to these questions, we find him responding to the first question (which asks whether God moves any body immediately) by noting that God is not united to any body. Hence, he is not a mover in the way a soul moves a body that it informs, or in the way

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[27] Kilwardby, *De 43 questionibus* 2, p. 14: "Secunda nec est philosophica, nec memini eam esse ab alico sanctorum approbatum tanquam ueram et certam."

[28] Regarding Kilwardby's "naturalistic" account of celestial motion, see Weisheipl, "Celestial Movers," 317.

[29] Kilwardby, *De 43 questionibus* 3, p. 15.

[30] Kilwardby, *De 43 questionibus* 4, pp. 15–16.

[31] Kilwardby, *De 43 questionibus* 5, p. 16: "nullatenus sequitur, si Deus non mouet illa corpora immediate, quod angeli ea moueant . . ."

the mover of a celestial sphere moves the sphere to which it is united.[32] Instead, God moves bodies through "obediential motion," as occurs with the heart in relation to the motion of bodily organs. According to this sense of motion, Albert tells us, the first question was answered by Aristotle long before us.[33] For God is the mover of the first celestial sphere, which in turn causes the motions of all the other celestial spheres and all terrestrial motions. Through obedience, then, all bodies are moved by God. Moreover, he moves all movable things in the manner in which a generator causes motion in the things that it generates, namely, by giving form to those effects. For by giving form, God gives all that follows from form, which includes motion and place. In this way, he immediately moves all that is.[34]

Albert next begins question 2, which concerns angelic ministration, by noting that none of the ancient Peripatetics say anything about angels, although some of the newer ones do. Among the latter he lists Avicenna and Alghazali as examples of "Arab" Peripatetics, as well as Isaac Israeli and Moses Maimonides as examples of Jewish ones. These philosophers claim that what they mean by "Intelligences" is synonymous with what the average person means by "angels." But the two sorts of entities are not in fact the same. The Intelligences of the philosophers are entirely immobile and do not move through space. By contrast the angels are presented in Scripture as coming and going.[35]

Having drawn this distinction, Albert proceeds to present the Peripatetic (or to be more precise, Avicennian) cosmology. As he explains, the Peripatetics identify ten celestial spheres, each of which is moved by an Intelligence. Although Albert does not think that these movers are angels, he is nevertheless in agreement with this basic cosmology: the celestial spheres are moved by unmoved movers that are spiritual beings, which he calls "Intelligences."[36] Still, Albert does not consider the Intelligences to

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[32] Albertus Magnus, *Problemata determinata* 1, ed. James A. Weisheipl, Editio Coloniensis 17/1:46, line 86 – p. 47, line 23.

[33] See Aristotle *De caelo* 2.2 and 2.12.

[34] Albertus Magnus, *Problemata determinata* 1, p. 47, line 24 – p. 48, line 13: "Hoc igitur motu movet deus omne quod est, et corpus et alia, immediate, aliis autem modis non movet." Albert is careful to note, however, that God differs from a natural generator because he gives form by the influence of his primary causality rather than through the motion of a generative act (ibid.).

[35] Albertus Magnus, *Problemata determinata* 2, p. 48, lines 25–61.

[36] Albertus Magnus, *Problemata determinata* 2, p. 48, line 61 – p. 49, line 27. For a detailed consideration of Albert's cosmology as well as its similarities with and differences from Avicenna's, see Weisheipl, "Celestial Movers," 301–12.

be the *proximate* movers of the celestial spheres. Instead, he tells us that they move the spheres indirectly by attracting the desire of those movers that are proximate: forms conjoined to the celestial bodies. According to Albert, these forms are not the souls of the spheres but are instead "luminous forms of intelligence and desire" that are produced by the Intelligences that move them.[37] It is unclear what precisely he considers the nature of these luminous forms to be, but this much is clear: he does not consider them to be angels.[38]

In response to question 3, Albert simply notes that its determination is clear since it has already been shown that angels, according to the philosophical sciences, are not movers of the celestial bodies.[39] And given his prior responses, he notes that the determination of question 4 is clear as well: no one has infallibly proven that angels are the celestial movers. Albert reminds us that the Intelligences of the philosophers are *not* the angels of Scripture. Still, he grants that certain Arab and Jewish philosophers have proven that the Intelligences do move the heavenly bodies. Indeed, Albert goes so far as to say that philosophy is compelled (*cogitur*) to posit the existence of the Intelligences because of the order of reality. As he explains, the forms found in any order whatsoever require some "first" that causes them by itself and by its own substantial light (*suo substantiali lumine*), namely, some intelligence to make all those forms. We find this to be the case in art where what is first is an intelligence, as the carpenter is first in the art of carpentry and makes all the forms expressed by his art through the motion of his instruments. Although philosophers have not proven the movers of the celestial bodies to be angels, Albert concludes that regarding the existence of Intelligences as movers of this type "this *is* infallibly proven by the philosophers, and here we have briefly stated the argument by which philosophers have proven this."[40]

Finally, in response to question 5, Albert contends that it has not been infallibly proven by anyone who either knows or does not know philosophy that the angels are the movers of the heavenly bodies. Rather, he insists, the opposite (*contradictorium*) of this position is proven, namely,

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[37] Albertus Magnus, *Problemata determinata* 2, p. 49, line 81 – p. 50, line 38.

[38] On Albert's vagueness regarding the nature of these movers, see Weisheipl, "Celestial Movers," 309. Left implicit in Albert's response to q. 2 is the conclusion that natural motion is not the result of angelic ministration.

[39] Albertus Magnus, *Problemata determinata* 3, p. 50, lines 49–52.

[40] Albertus Magnus, *Problemata determinata* 4, p. 50, lines 54–74: "Et hoc apud philosophos infallibiliter est probatum, et hic posuimus breviter rationem, qua hoc philosophi probaverunt." Emphasis added in translation.

that angels are not such movers—presumably because philosophers have proven instead that the celestial bodies are moved by Intelligences, which are non-angels. Angels, rather, are God's messengers, a function that can be shown only by revelation, not by natural reason.[41]

From Albert's replies to these five questions, then, we find that, like Kilwardby, he concludes it to be impossible to prove that angels move the celestial bodies, and the reason is that those bodies are not moved by angels at all. The two respondents, however, differ significantly in their accounts of how those bodies are in fact moved. Still, as we have seen, Kilwardby is willing to grant that the Peripatetic model of celestial motion can be defended by reasonable (i.e., probable) arguments. Albert, who adopts this model, goes one step further to hold that it is not merely reasonably defended but infallibly proven. In short, he thinks that the existence of these separate substances is philosophically demonstrable from the motion of the celestial bodies.

Nevertheless, because Albert is unwilling to identify the Intelligences of the philosophers with the angels of Scripture, he concludes that the argument from the motion of the celestial bodies does not amount to a proof of angels at all. More to the point, for Albert it is impossible to offer any sort of philosophical argument for the existence of angels, whether demonstrative or probable, since their role as God's spiritual messengers is known only through revelation.

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Turning now to Thomas's responses to the five questions (or articles, in his parlance), we find that he begins his reply to article 1 by citing the authority of Augustine that the universal order is divinely established so that corporeal creatures are moved by mediating spirits acting as secondary causes.[42] Nevertheless, the divine power is not bound to this order in such a way that it could not do something outside this order whenever it would please God. This is clear as regards miraculous works. Thomas here implies that in such cases God immediately moves bodies, although not as part of the usual (natural) order of the universe.[43] Unlike Kilwardby and Albert, then, Thomas holds that God is able to move a body immediately, not simply in the sense of creating it or giving it form.[44]

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41 Albertus Magnus, *Problemata determinata* 5, p. 50, line 75 – p. 51, line 12.
42 Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.4.9, CCL 50:135.
43 Aquines, *Responsio de 43 articulis* 1, Editio Leonina 42:327–28, lines 59–77.
44 Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.105.2, Editio Leonina 5:472–73.

Since article 2 depends upon article 3, Thomas next combines his responses into a single consideration. He begins by noting that if bodies are governed through the mediation of spiritual creatures, as he had affirmed in article 1, then spiritual creatures are also the cause of the motion of those bodies. It follows, therefore, that God moves the celestial bodies through spiritual creatures. Thomas cites Augustine as an example of a *Sanctus* who holds this position.[45] Regarding whether the celestial bodies are animated, he notes that John Damascene rejects this position, although Augustine's view is unclear.[46] Thomas adds, however, that the movement of the celestial bodies by spiritual creatures is not denied by any authors that he remembers reading, whether *Sancti* or philosophers. Indeed, the position that angels move the heavens is not cast into doubt by any wise men (*sapientes*); for all the natural motions of lower bodies are caused by the motion of the celestial bodies, which itself is a position that is both apparent from experiment and proven through reason by philosophers. Moreover, Thomas notes, this position is confirmed by the authority of *Sancti* such as Augustine and Dionysius.[47] Hence, he concludes, it follows that everything that is naturally moved is moved by the ministry of angels moving the celestial bodies.[48]

Turning his attention to articles 4 and 5, Thomas again combines his responses into a single answer regarding the role of angels as celestial movers. He begins his reply by noting that philosophers such as Platonists and Peripatetics have attempted to prove this role through arguments that they considered to be demonstrative. Among their arguments are ones founded upon the order mentioned in the prior articles, namely, of God's governing inferior creatures through superior ones; these arguments are also accepted by the *Sancti*. Indeed, the celestial bodies could not be moved solely by their own natures in the manner of heavy and light bodies. This position, Thomas insists, is entirely impossible (*omnino impossibile*).[49] Hence, if the heavenly bodies are not immediately moved

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[45] Augustine, *Super Genesim ad litteram* 8.20.39, CSEL 28/1:258–59.

[46] John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* 20.11, trans. Burgundio of Pisa, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1955), 83; Augustine, *Super Genesim ad litteram* 2.18.38, CSEL 28/1:62.

[47] Augustine, *De trinitate* 3.4.9, CCL 50:135; Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus* 4.4, ed. Beate Regina Suchla (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 148, lines 3–5.

[48] *Responsio de 43 articulis* 2–3, Editio Leonina 42:328, lines 78–116.

[49] Thomas does not explain here why such motion is impossible. Elsewhere, however, he explains that it is impossible because celestial motion is circular and, hence, continuous;

by God, it follows either that they are animated and moved by their own souls or that they are moved by angels. Of these possibilities, he concludes that it is more fitting to assert (*melius dicitur*) the latter.[50]

From Thomas's responses to these questions, it is clear that he differs significantly from Kilwardby regarding the cause of celestial motion. For Thomas, as for Albert, whatever moves these bodies must be a spiritual and intellectual mover, and his insistence on this point indicates that, like Albert, he views this conclusion to be demonstrable. Unlike Albert, however, Thomas is not hesitant to identify the Intelligences of the philosophers with the beings that both Scripture and the *Sancti* call angels. That is not to say that he agrees with everything the philosophers have had to say about these beings, as he makes clear in the *De substantiis separatis*. In that work, Thomas carefully identifies philosophical views about the separate substances that are not in agreement with the faith.[51] Still, most of his corrections there are not theological in nature but philosophical, showing what natural reason can correctly determine about angels.

Since Thomas is willing to identify the Intelligences with the angels, he goes beyond his teacher Albert to identify the angels as the movers of the celestial bodies.[52] With that said, Thomas's responses in these questions indicate that he does not consider this view to admit of certitude. Rather, he indicates three possible immediate movers of these bodies: God himself, celestial souls, or the angels. Thomas's acknowledgement of

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by contrast, natural motion is oriented to terminating at some location. See, e.g., *De spiritualibus creaturis* 6 co., 24/2:169, lines 212–31.

[50] Aquinas, *Responsio de 43 articulis* 4–5, Editio Leonina 42:328–29, lines 117–40. Thomas adds that there have been some philosophers who have held that the *first* celestial body is moved by God and the mediation of its own soul, but that the other heavenly bodies are moved through the mediation not only of their own souls but also of Intelligences (ibid.).

[51] See Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* prol., Editio Leonina 40:D 41, lines 1–10.

[52] In article 6 of his *De spiritualibus creaturis*, Editio Leonina 24/2:69, lines 186–231, Thomas writes that one cannot demonstratively prove whether the heavens are animated and moved by souls that are united to them or whether they are inanimate and moved simply by angels. He notes that both opinions have the character of probability, but identifies the latter possibility as more fitting and, hence, more likely. This is a position that he adopts throughout his writings.

In the same article, Thomas presents a twofold order of angelic movers: some are united to the celestial bodies as movers to the moveable (rather than as souls), whereas others act as the ends of these movements (24/2:69–70, lines 232–43). Thomas's distinction between these two orders of angels is not meant to supplant the traditional Christian hierarchy of angels that consists of nine orders and is based upon their general offices (*Summa theologiae* 1a.110.1 ad 3, Editio Leonina 5:511). For an overview of Thomas's doctrine of the angels as movers of the heavenly bodies, see Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie*, 103–42.

other possible movers suggests that he considers the argument for angelic movers to be at best probable.

This reading is confirmed by what he has to say on this matter in another set of expert responses that Thomas provides shortly after his responses to John of Vercelli. In his *Responsio de 36 articulis* (1271), Thomas replies to questions posed by Friar Baxianus of Lodi, the lector at the Venetian priory. Earlier that same year, Thomas had responded to the Venetian Lector with his *Responsio de 30 articulis*. The Lector's students responded in turn by submitting some supplementary questions; as a result, Thomas redacted his earlier responses into the *Responsio de 36 articulis*. In doing so, he integrated into this new set some elements of his replies to John of Vercelli.[53] Of the replies in *De 36 articulis*, it is Thomas's treatment of article 2 that concerns us here, which asks whether anyone has infallibly proven that the angels are the movers of the heavenly bodies. Thomas replies that

> The books of the philosophers abound with such proofs, which they consider [to be] demonstrations. It seems to me, likewise, that it can be demonstratively proven that the celestial bodies are moved by some intellect: either immediately by God or in a mediated way by angels. But [the position] that God would move through mediating angels is *more fitting* (*magis congruit*) with the order of things, which Dionysius has maintained is unfailing (*infallibilem*) so that, according to the usual course of events, lower things are directed by God through intermediaries.[54]

In this reply, Thomas not only provides an answer to the question at hand but also indirectly provides a more explicit answer to article 4 of the *De 43 articulis*, which had asked the same question. Here, in *De 36 articulis*, Thomas tells us at least this much: the philosophers *think* they have infallibly proven that angels move the celestial bodies, since they consider their proofs to be demonstrations. Does Thomas agree with them? What he says next is somewhat cagey: he agrees with them that it can be demonstratively proven that some intellect moves the celestial bodies.

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[53] Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:354.

[54] Thomas Aquinas, *Responsio de 36 articulis* 2, Editio Leonina 42:339, lines 26–35: "Ad hoc respondeo quod libri philosophorum huiusmodi probationibus habundant quas ipsi demonstrationes putant. Michi etiam uidetur quod demonstratiue probari potest quod ab aliquo intellectu corpora celestia moueantur, uel a Deo immediate uel mediantibus angelis. Sed quod mediantibus angelis ea moueat magis congruit ordini rerum quem Dyonisius infallibilem asserit, ut inferiora a Deo per media secundum cursum communem amministrentur." Emphasis added in translation.

But is this intellectual being an angel? Not necessarily, since it could be God himself. Thomas thus appears only willing to grant demonstrability to the entire disjunctive proposition that the celestial bodies are moved either by God or by angels. The implication is that neither disjunct alone is demonstrable, since the truth of the other is a possibility. At best, therefore, one could offer a probable argument for angelic movers. And, in fact, Thomas confirms this reading in the lines that follow when he describes such an account of celestial motion merely as more fitting (*magis congruit*) than immediate motion by God. It is more fitting because of the hierarchical order of the universe identified by Dionysius. Thus, we find Thomas trading on the Latin word *infallibilem*: it is this hierarchical order that he presents as infallible (i.e., unfailing), not any argument for angels as celestial movers.[55]

Like Kilwardby and Albert, then, Thomas concludes that one cannot demonstratively prove that angels are celestial movers. Whereas his fellow respondents reach this conclusion because they hold that angels are in no way such movers, Thomas by contrast reaches this conclusion because he identifies angels as but one possible account of celestial motion. We can justly infer, therefore, that Thomas would consider any argument for the existence of angels from celestial motion to be probable at best. This fact might explain, in part, why Thomas dismisses Aristotle's line of reasoning in his *De spiritualibus creaturis* as "not very suitable for us" to prove the existence of angels. Granted, he explicitly rejects Aristotle's argument because it presumed the eternal motion of the celestial bodies. But as we have seen, Thomas is willing to adjust that argument in other texts. Why, then, does he not simply do the same in *De spiritualibus creaturis*? One explanation, I would suggest, is precisely the fact that he considers even the adjusted argument to be merely probable. If my reading is correct, then the arguments that Thomas presents as "suitable for us" are so not only because they avoid the errors of his predecessors but because they are in Thomas's eyes demonstrative. To see if that is indeed the case, we need to resume our consideration of article 5 from the *De spiritualibus creaturis* to take a close look at the three arguments for the existence of angels that Thomas sets forth as suitable.

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[55] See Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2.14.1.3 co., ed. Mandonnet, 2:352–53.

3. *Arguments from Perfection*

Thomas's first argument in article 5 begins by noting that if we consider the perfection of the universe, it is clear that some substances exist entirely without bodies. For the perfection of the universe seems to be such that it does not lack any nature that can possibly exist.[56] He then sets forth the following principle: if any two things exist, and if one of these does not by its nature depend upon the other, it is possible for one to be found existing without the other. For example, animal nature does not depend upon rational nature. That is why it is possible for us to find animals existing that are not rational. Having enunciated this principle of possibility, Thomas notes that it belongs to the nature of substance to subsist *per se*, a mode of existing that in no way requires a bodily nature. For bodily nature involves the accidents of dimensions, which do not cause subsistence. Hence, he concludes that after God, who is not contained in any genus, there are some substances in the genus "substance" that are entirely without bodies.[57]

Thomas's second argument reaches the same conclusion by looking at the order of things. Here, he enunciates the so-called principle of continuity: in any order, one extreme cannot be reached from the other except through things in the middle.[58] Thomas offers an example from the corporeal order, noting that fire is found immediately under celestial body, and under that air, then water, and finally earth—an order that follows the nobility and subtlety of these bodies. Looking next to the metaphysical order, Thomas notes that at the summit something exists that is in every way simple and one, namely, God. Applying the principle of continuity to this order, he argues that it is impossible for corporeal substance to lie immediately below God since such substance is entirely composed and divisible. There must, therefore, be many intermediate beings that come between the highest divine simplicity and corporeal multiplicity. Some of these beings are incorporeal substances united to bodies (viz., human

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[56] He notes that this is why in the book of Genesis individual things are said to be good, but all things together are said to be exceedingly good.

[57] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 co., Editio Leonina 24/2:61, lines 195–214. This argument is similar to Thomas's fifth argument for the existence of angels in *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.91 n. 1777, ed. Marietti, 2:261a.

[58] For discussion of this principle, see Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 191–202.

souls) whereas others are incorporeal substances *not* united to bodies (viz., angels).[59]

Thomas's third argument proceeds from the distinctive characteristic of intellect (*ex proprietate intellectus*). The activity of understanding, he notes, clearly cannot be performed by a body. Hence, the sort of substance that performs this activity does not depend upon a body to have existence (*esse*) but is elevated above body, for, as a thing is, so it acts. If therefore some intelligent substance is united to a body, it is not so united because it is intelligent but for some other reason. Thus, we find that the human soul is united to a body, because without it, that soul would lack the activity of abstracting from phantasms, which it needs in order to make intellectual understanding complete. But this activity of abstracting is only incidental to the intellectual operation itself. In fact, Thomas explains, it is an imperfection of intellectual activity to acquire knowledge in this way, just as it is an imperfection of sight (according to medieval biology) that a bat needs darkness in order to see. Having drawn this distinction, he then enunciates the following two principles: first, whatever belongs to a thing incidentally (*per accidens*) is not found in all cases of that type of thing; second, in any genus, perfect being (*esse perfectum*) is found before imperfect being (*esse imperfectum*), for the perfect is naturally prior to the imperfect as act is prior to potency. In light of these principles, he concludes that there must exist some incorporeal substances that do not need a body for their intellectual activity, and so such substances are not united to a body.[60]

Unfortunately, nowhere in these three arguments does Thomas explicitly tell us what he considers their probative force to be. What we do find, however, is a common thread running through all three: the notion of perfection.[61] This notion provides some insight into his thoughts on the matter. The first argument states that created separate substances are required for the perfection of the universe, for that perfection requires all possible natures.[62] The second argument reasons instead from the order

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[59] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 co., Editio Leonina 24/2:61–62, lines 214–30. This argument is similar to Thomas's third argument in *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.91 n. 1775, ed. Marietti, 2:260b–261a.

[60] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 co., Editio Leonina 24/2:62, lines 230–58. This argument is similar to Thomas's seventh argument in *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.91 n. 1779, ed. Marietti, 2:261b.

[61] Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 277–78.

[62] As will be discussed below, Thomas is probably referring here to all possible *grades* of being rather than to all possible species.

of the universe, and, as Thomas explains in numerous passages elsewhere, the perfection of the universe consists precisely in its order.[63] Implied in this second argument, therefore, is the position that if the universe as God has made it did not contain any wholly incorporeal beings, it would be disordered and, hence, imperfect. Finally, in the third argument Thomas reasons that in any genus the perfect is found before the imperfect. Considering the nature of intelligence, he shows that man is an imperfect intelligent substance. Therefore, the perfection of the genus "intelligent substance" requires that there be a perfect intelligent substance.

The underlying theme of perfection in these three arguments might lead to the impression that Thomas is simply presenting arguments from fittingness and, hence, probable arguments. In other words, it might seem as though he is saying that the universe as we know it would simply be a better place if angels existed, and therefore they do. Such a reading might follow if his notion of perfection was of some superlative or unattainable ideal that only admitted of approximation. But that is not his notion of perfection: for Thomas, to be perfect is simply to be complete.[64] When we consider these three arguments in light of this fact, it becomes clear that he views the angels as perfecting the universe because they are parts that complete some whole. Thus, when he argues that their existence would perfect the genus "intelligent substance," or the universe as a whole, or its fundamental order, Thomas is not arguing that such things would simply be better if angels existed; rather, he is arguing that these things would be lacking and incomplete if angels did not exist.[65] In short, the implication is that the existence of angels is required for their perfection. Viewed from this perspective, these arguments appear to be intended as more than mere probable arguments.

With that said, it should be granted that Thomas does draw a distinction elsewhere between two types of goods that perfect the universe. One type simply adds to this perfection as a sort of adornment, making it more decorous. Such goods, he notes, are not necessary for the perfection of the universe. Other goods, by contrast, *are* necessary for its perfection,

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[63] See, e.g., Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.85 nn. 706–10, ed. Marietti, 2:96a–96b; *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.44 n. 1204, ed. Marietti, 2:162b; *Summa theologiae* 1a.89.1, Editio Leonina 5:371; *Summa theologiae* 3a.4.1 ad 4, Editio Leonina 11:72; and *De potentia* 3.16 co., ed. P. M. Pession in *Quaestiones disputatae* (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1965), 2:85–90.

[64] See, e.g., Aquinas, *In Met*. 5.18 nn. 1033–43, 271–72; and *Summa theologiae* 1a.5.1, Editio Leonina 4:56. See also Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 41–73.

[65] Regarding the perfection of the universe as a whole, see Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 87–105.

and Thomas refers to such goods as essential parts of the universe (*essentiales partes universi*).[66] Which sort of goods are the angels, we might ask? Thomas makes clear that they are the latter sort: essential parts.[67] And it is their role as such parts that he appears to be arguing for in *De spiritualibus creaturis*, again suggesting that his arguments there for the existence of angels are intended as more than mere probable arguments.

Thomas presents the role of angels as essential parts of the universe in even clearer terms in *Summa theologiae* 1a, q. 50, a. 1. There, he offers a single argument for their existence. Like the third argument from *De spiritualibus creaturis*, this one is also founded on the nature of intellect. Nevertheless, it adds to that argument a further point, namely, that the existence of incorporeal intellectual creatures perfects not simply their genus but the universe as a whole:

> It is *necessary to hold* (*necesse est ponere*) that some incorporeal creatures exist. For what God principally intends in created things is the good, which consists in the assimilation to God. But a perfect assimilation of effect to cause is found when the effect imitates the cause according to the way in which the cause produces the effect, as when what is hot makes something hot. God, however, produces a creature by intellect and will, as has been shown above. Hence *the perfection of the universe requires* (*ad perfectionem universi requiritur*) that there be some intellectual creatures. Moreover, intellectual understanding cannot be the act of a body, nor can it be the act of some bodily power since every body is determined to the here and now. Hence, it is *necessary to hold* (*necesse est ponere*) that there be some incorporeal creature so that the universe be perfect.[68]

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[66] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.86 n. 722, ed. Marietti, 2:97b. On essential parts of the universe, see Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 146–48.

[67] In *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.98 n. 1832, ed. Marietti, 2:269b, Thomas notes that "[o]stensum est quod principales partes universi omnes sunt a Deo immediate creatae. Non est igitur una earum ab alia. Unaquaeque autem substantiarum separatarum est de principalibus partibus universi, multo amplius quam sol vel luna: cum unaquaeque earum habeat propriam speciem, et nobiliorem quam quaevis species corporalium rerum. Non igitur una earum causatur ab alia, sed omnes immediate a Deo."

[68] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.1 co., Editio Leonina 5:3–4: "Respondeo dicendum quod necesse est ponere aliquas creaturas incorporeas. Id enim quod praecipue in rebus creatis Deus intendit, est bonum quod consistit in assimilatione ad Deum. Perfecta autem assimilatio effectus ad causam attenditur, quando effectus imitatur causam secundum illud per quod causa producit effectum; sicut calidum facit calidum. Deus autem creaturam producit per intellectum et voluntatem, ut supra ostensum est. Unde ad perfectionem universi requiritur quod sint aliquae creaturae intellectuales. Intelligere autem non potest esse actus corporis, nec alicuius virtutis corporeae: quia omne corpus determinatur ad hic et nunc. Unde necesse est ponere, ad hoc quod universum sit perfectum, quod sit aliqua incorporea creatura." Emphasis added in translation.

In considering this argument for the existence of angels, Joseph Owens identifies it as having "exceptionally strong probability" but notes that "it is not strictly demonstrative."[69] He offers a brief critique of the argument but does not make a point of noting the probative force that Thomas himself assigns to it. Regardless of the argument's objective nature, Thomas's words reveal his personal conviction of its strength: he tells us that the perfection of the universe *requires* that there be angels, and that this is a position that we must *necessarily hold*. This language of necessity, I would argue, provides evidence that Thomas considers his line of reasoning here and in the *De spiritualibus creaturis* to be demonstrative. What sort of demonstration he might consider it to be we will need to return to below.[70] For now, it is worth noting simply that, for Thomas, the conclusion that angels exist is, in some sense, a necessary conclusion.

Why, then, does Owens insist that the *Summa theologiae* argument cannot be a demonstration? Because in his view, such a reading is at odds with Thomas's broader metaphysics. As Owens explains, for Thomas "the first cause is not in Leibnizian fashion obliged to produce the best possible universe nor in any way necessitated to make the present universe as perfect as its cadres allow."[71] If we follow Owens' reading, then, Thomas

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For a detailed commentary on this argument, see Zammit, "De existentia substantiarum intellectualium," 513–23.

[69] Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, 330, note 1. Bazán, by contrast, sees this argument as exceptionally weak since the existence of human beings appears to satisfy the requirement for intellectual beings to perfect the universe ("On Angels and Human Beings," 77–78).

[70] After presenting this argument in *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.1, Thomas notes that the *antiqui* failed to arrive at this conclusion because they did not understand the distinction between sense and intellect, and that the Sadducees made the same error. He concludes that once one knows this distinction, "rationabiliter ostendit esse aliquas res incorporeas, a solo intellectu comprehensibiles." Thomas's use of the word "rationabiliter" to describe this argument could be read as saying that it is merely "reasonable" and not demonstrative. Although he does at times employ the term "rationabiliter" in this way, he also employs it in a broad sense to refer to the scientific method of logic that is used in the demonstrative sciences. In this article, he appears to employ the term according to this latter sense. The point I take him to be making is that we may respond to the Sadducees not simply through recourse to Scripture (as Thomas does in the *sed contra*) but also through natural reason (Editio Leonina 5:3–4).

Regarding the various ways in which sciences proceed *rationabiliter*, see Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 6.1 co., Editio Leonina 50:157–63, lines 1–430.

[71] Owens, *Christian Metaphysics*, 330, note 1. For discussion of Aquinas's views regarding God's freedom to create a different universe or even not to create at all, see John F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas on God's Freedom to Create or Not," in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas II* (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 218–39.

could not possibly intend this argument to be demonstrative. A different reading, however, is offered by Cardinal Cajetan (Thomas de Vio).

4. *Necessary Creation of Angels?*

Commenting on the same argument in *Summa theologiae* 1a, q. 50, a. 1, Cajetan shows how it can be read without lapsing into the Leibnizian error described by Owens. Drawing a distinction between what he terms the grades of beings (*gradus rerum*) and the special modes (*modi speciales*) of those grades, Cajetan notes that the grades of being are determined by various degrees of act and potency. Hence, there is a finite number of such grades. The supreme of these is most like God, and this is the grade of intellectual being. As regards the special modes (or species) of beings, there is again only a finite number in actuality; nevertheless, the number of these species is infinite in light of both their logical possibility and what is within God's power. For God could always create more and different species of beings. Moreover, no species is supremely creatable such that God could not create a greater one. In short, Cajetan is telling us that the argument in *Summa theologiae* 1a, q. 50, a. 1 is not saying that this world is the "best of all possible worlds" because it does not claim that any special mode of created being must exist.[72] If we follow his reading, the perfection of the universe does not require the creation of any given species such as dog, oak tree, or rhinestone; it does, however, require the creation of at least some species of material beings. Similarly, the perfection of the universe does not require the existence of any particular angel such as Michael or Gabriel, but it does require some (or at least one) immaterial being. For, as Cajetan explains, "the perfection of the universe requires that it contain all grades of creatable things, but not all creatable creatures. And, therefore, from the perfection of the universe one can rightly infer [the existence of] the grade of intellectual beings."[73]

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[72] Indeed, following this reading of Thomas's argument, we might add that no individual created being must exist either. Hence, according to Cajetan, it is entirely impossible for there to be a "best possible world," since God could always create a greater species of being or a greater individual being.

[73] (Thomas de Vio) Cajetan, *Commentaria in Summa theologiae* 1a.50.1, Editio Leonina 5:4–5: "Unde perfectio universi exigit quidem continentiam omnium graduum creabilium, sed non omnes creaturas creabiles. Et ideo ex perfectione universi optime infertur gradus intellectualis."

If Cajetan's reading of Thomas is correct, one might still ask why the universe needs to be perfect at all. Is it not within God's power to create an imperfect universe? Is he not free to choose to create a universe without angels? We find answers to these questions in Thomas's *De potentia* (1265–1266), written just prior to the *Prima Pars*. In *De potentia* q. 3, a. 16 co., he considers whether a multitude can proceed immediately and properly from one first thing, namely, God. Thomas explains that several philosophers held such a procession to be impossible, and their position seems to arise from a consideration of how a cause is related to an effect. For it seems that a cause is necessarily related to its effect so that a given effect (*talis effectus*) necessarily proceeds from a given cause (*talis causa*). In other words, from one cause (or type of cause) only one effect (or type of effect) can come. Reminding us that there are four causes, he responds to this view by addressing how each type of cause is related to an effect.[74]

The material and efficient causes precede an effect as to intrinsic being (*esse internum*). The final cause also precedes an effect, although it does so in intention rather than according to being (*esse*). By contrast, form, inasmuch as it is form, does not precede the effect in either respect. The reason is that the effect has its being (*esse*) by the form and consequently the being of the form is simultaneous with that of the effect. With that said, Thomas adds that form can be taken in another respect—not as form but as an end that exists in the intention of the agent. In this respect, form precedes the effect because the agent's intention does. Taken as an end, the form is the goal of the agent's operation and it terminates that operation.

Nevertheless, not every end is a form since there is a type of intended end that is beyond the end of the operation. For example the form of a house is the end that terminates the builder's operation, but it does not terminate his intention. Rather, his intention is terminated by a further end, which is to have a dwelling-place. Having outlined how the four causes are related to an effect, Thomas explains that the necessity of a given sort of effect (*tale causatum*) cannot be due to its form as such, since the form is simultaneous with the effect. An effect can, however, be

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I am grateful to Lawrence Dewan for drawing my attention to Cajetan's commentary on this article. For Dewan's own discussion of this text, see "Thomas Aquinas and Being as a Nature," *Acta Philosophica* 12 (2003): 123–35, at 134.

[74] Aquinas, *De potentia* 3.16 co., 87–88.

necessary either from the power of the efficient cause, or from the matter, or from the end—whether the end of intention or of operation.[75]

In light of these general observations regarding how effects relate to the four causes, Thomas then addresses the particular case of God's effects. Beginning with material causality, he notes that God's action does not presuppose any prior matter, since he is the author of being in its entirety (*totius esse*). Hence, God's effects cannot be necessitated by their material cause. Nor are God's effects necessitated by his effective power: since God's power is infinite, none of his effects can be equal to his power; thus, his power cannot be determined to any single effect or to any degree of distance (*distantiae gradum*). Nor is it necessary that God produce any given effect from the end of his intention (*ex fine intentionis*), for the end of his intention is the divine goodness, which gains nothing from the production of effects. God's goodness, furthermore, cannot be fully represented by any effect or fully communicated to it. Rather, there are many ways to participate in his goodness, and so it is not necessary for any of his effect to exist in any given way. Hence, none of God's effects is necessary from the end of his intention.[76]

Examining final causality further, Thomas notes that necessity does arise when something is needed either to fulfill the intention of the end completely or even simply to fulfill it sufficiently. In light of this fact, he concludes that there can be necessity in God's works on the part of form—not taken as such but as the end of the operation, namely, as a suppositional necessity. Since the form of God's works is not infinite, it has a determinate mode of being (*modus essendi*) and determinate principles needed for it to exist. For example, if we suppose that God intends to make a human being, it is necessary that he give this effect a rational soul and an organized body. Thomas concludes that we find a similar situation as regards the universe as a whole. As he explains,

> The fact that God wished to make such a universe is not due to a necessity or obligation either from the end or from the power of the efficient cause or from the matter, as has been shown. But supposing that he did wish to produce such a universe, it was necessary that he produce these sorts of creatures (*tales et tales creaturas*), from which such a form (*talis forma*) of the universe would have arisen. And since the very perfection of the universe would require both a multitude and diversity of things (for this perfection cannot be found in any one of them due to its distance from the first goodness), it was necessary from the supposition (*ex suppositione*) of the

[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

> intended form that God would produce many and diverse creatures: some simple, some composite; some corruptible, and some incorruptible.[77]

We see, then, that Thomas is willing to identify some of God's effects as necessarily created. He is careful to note, however, that they are created not from an absolute necessity but from a suppositional one: just as God must create human beings with certain parts if he is to create humans at all, so must he create the universe as a whole with certain parts if he is to create it at all. Given the form of the universe that God has intended, its perfection requires the creation of certain beings, and the examples of such beings listed by Thomas appear to confirm Cajetan's view that the perfection of the universe requires at the very least certain grades of being.[78]

Still, we might ask: does Thomas think these beings are necessary for the perfection of *any* possible universe that God could create? This text from the *De potentia* is not clear on this point; Thomas merely tells us what is required in order for the form of a universe such as this one to be perfect. This much, however, is clear from the text: Thomas thinks that the simple creatures called "angels" are necessary for the perfection of the universe that God has in fact created, a conclusion Thomas thinks we can arrive at from observing its order.[79] Nor does this mean that he considers this universe to be a sort of Leibnizian "best possible world," for as he notes in reply to an objection within the same article, "the universe that has been made by God is best as regards those things that exist, but not as regards those things that God can make."[80]

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[77] Aquinas, *De potentia* 3.16 co., 88: "Quod enim Deus tale universum constituere voluerit, non est necessarium neque debitum, neque ex fine neque ex potentia efficientis, neque materiae, ut ostensum est. Sed supposito quod tale universum producere voluerit, necessarium fuit quod tales et tales creaturas produxerit, ex quibus talis forma universi consurgeret. Et cum ipsa universi perfectio et multitudinem et diversitatem rerum requirat, quia in una earum inveniri non potest propter recessum a complemento bonitatis primae; necesse fuit ex suppositione formae intentae quod Deus multas creaturas et diversas produceret; quasdam simplices, quasdam compositas; et quasdam corruptibiles, et quasdam incorruptibiles."

[78] Regarding Thomas's views on how absolute necessity and suppositional necessity pertain to the divine will, see, e.g., *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.86 nn. 717–22, ed. Marietti, 2:97a–b.

[79] Thomas frequently refers to angels as "simple substances." Although he at times also refers to the human soul in this way, I read this passage from the *De potentia* as referring to simple creatures that are complete natures in themselves, which the human soul is not. This reading is confirmed by what Thomas says later in the same work about the place of angels in the universe (see *De potentia* 3.18 co., pp. 98–99; *De potentia* 4.2 ad 29, p. 125).

[80] Aquinas, *De potentia* 3.16 ad 17, p. 90: "Universum quod est a Deo productum, est optimum respectu eorum quae sunt, non tamen respectu eorum quae Deus facere potest."

Granting Thomas's position that the perfection of this universe requires the existence of angels, we might next ask why he thinks this universe must be perfect at all. Could God not choose to make an imperfect universe? As we saw above, Thomas concludes that the divine power is not determined to produce any given grade of being, indicating that he thinks it is within God's absolute power to make a universe without angels. Moreover, from what Thomas says about the divine will elsewhere within the same work, it is clear that he views God as free to create this universe without them.[81] Why, then, does Thomas conclude that the universe must be perfect and include angels?

We find an explanation toward the end of article 16, where he reminds us that without these various grades of being, the universe would be incomplete, just as a house or the human body would be incomplete if they did not have a variety of parts. If every part of the human body were an eye, the body could not function; and if every part of a house were a roof, the house could not stand.[82] "Thus," he concludes, "it must be said that from one first [principle] proceeds the multitude and diversity of creatures, not because of a necessity of matter, or a limitation of power, or an obligation of goodness, but *from the order of wisdom*, so that the perfection of the universe would be established in the diversity of creatures."[83] According to Thomas, it is in accordance with God's wisdom that the essential parts of the universe receive their suppositional necessity: God is free to create a different universe or even no universe at all, but given his wisdom and the universe that he freely intends to create, Thomas concludes that the universe must be perfect. And to be perfect, it must include the simple substances known as angels.[84]

Thomas addresses the topic of the "best possible world" a number of times throughout the *De potentia*. See, e.g., *De potentia* 1.5 ad 14–15, p. 20; *De potentia* 3.6 ad 26, p. 55; and *De potentia* 5.1 ad 14, p. 133. On this topic, see Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 98–105, 137–40.

[81] Aquinas, *De potentia* 1.5, pp. 17–23; *De potentia* 3.15, pp. 82–85.

[82] Regarding Thomas's recurring use of the analogy of a house for the universe in relation to its parts, see Blanchette, *Perfection of the Universe*, 12–19.

[83] Aquinas, *De potentia* 3.16 co., pp. 88–89: "*Sic igitur dicendum est*, quod ab uno primo multitudo et diversitas creaturarum processit, non propter materiae necessitatem, nec propter potentiae limitationem, nec propter bonitatem, nee propter bonitatis obligationem; sed ex ordine sapientiae, ut in diversitate creaturarum perfectio consisteret universi." Emphasis added in translation.

[84] Regarding whether God must create all the grades of being, Dewan notes that "if we were speaking merely of the divine *power*, Thomas could say, I suggest, that God might just have created necessary being or contingent being (particularly if we simplify the issue by limiting it to substantial being). A Universe containing only necessary beings involves no

Conclusion

I began this piece by asking whether Thomas considers the existence of angels to be demonstrable and, furthermore, whether he considers any of his own arguments for their existence to be demonstrative. As we have seen, Thomas himself never explicitly addresses these questions. Nevertheless, I hope to have shown that an analysis of his arguments reveals that he considers at least some of them to be demonstrative and, hence, that he considers the existence of angels to be demonstrable. If my reading is correct, a new question arises regarding the sort of demonstration Thomas considers these arguments to be: Does he consider them to be *propter quid* or *quia*? Here, one can only conjecture what his answer might be. In concluding this piece, I would like briefly to offer just such a conjectural consideration.

To begin with, it should be noted that Thomas's arguments from the *De spiritualibus creaturis* and the *Prima Pars* differ in a fundamental way from his famous proofs of God's existence. Whereas those proofs employ an *a posteriori* manner of reasoning, from effect to cause, Thomas's preferred arguments for the existence of angels instead employ an *a priori* method of reasoning, from cause to effect.[85] It is true that at times he does adopt Aristotle's *a posteriori* argument for separate substances by reasoning from the effect of celestial motion to the existence of angels as celestial movers, but as we have seen, Thomas does not consider this line of reasoning to be demonstrative. The limitation that he sees with it appears to be a limitation of any *a posteriori* argument for the existence of angels: whatever effect is due to angelic causality could just as well be due to divine causality.[86] If that is the case, then no *a posteriori* argument could demonstratively prove the existence of angels. It is for this reason, I would contend, that Thomas prefers to adopt *a priori* arguments to prove

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contradiction. It is inasmuch as we consider the divine *wisdom* that we rightly approach the contention that if he creates, he must create being and its proper differences" ("Being as a Nature," 133).

[85] Collins observes: "Since angels cannot be self-existent and infinite creators and since inferences based upon the effects of their secondary causality in the natural world yield only physical certitude, an entirely different approach from that employed in proving God's existence is required" (*Philosophy of the Angels*, 39).

[86] Indeed, as Thomas explains elsewhere, God is free to dispense with the order of angelic ministration. See, e.g., *Summa theologiae* 1a.112.1–2, Editio Leonina 5:520–22, and *De operationibus occultibus*, Editio Leonina 43:183, lines 46–70.

their existence, namely, because he wishes to employ a method of reasoning that allows for demonstrative proofs.[87]

To say that Thomas's preferred proofs of angels are *a priori* arguments is not to claim that they follow an Anselmian "ontological" approach of reasoning from the formal nature of angels to their existence. Rather, as we have seen, these arguments reason from another formal nature: that of the universe, or of its order, or of a genus to which angels belong. From such formal natures, the arguments proceed to show the existence of angels as necessary parts. With that said, these arguments do not present angels as proceeding from God according to an Avicennian model of necessary emanation.[88] As Thomas makes clear in the *De potentia*, the existence of these immaterial beings is necessary, but it is a necessity founded on the supposition that God has in fact freely chosen to create. Thus viewed, angels are created not out of a necessity imposed upon the divine will but, instead, out of a necessity deriving from the order of God's wisdom.

Can we know the order of God's wisdom sufficiently to draw the conclusion that he must have created angels out of suppositional necessity? I suspect not; hence, I am sympathetic with those scholars who conclude that Thomas's arguments for angels are at best probable ones. Nevertheless, Thomas himself appears confident enough to hold that we can sufficiently discern the order of God's wisdom from his effects, and thus we can conclude demonstratively that angels in fact exist. Again, this line of reasoning proceeds from a suppositional necessity, but the fact that it does should not be read to suggest that Thomas would therefore consider his arguments to be merely probable. For, as he takes pains to show elsewhere, reasoning *ex suppositione* is not incompatible with the methodology of demonstrative science.[89]

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[87] With the exception of the argument from celestial motion that he presents in *Summa contra Gentiles* 2, all of the other arguments in that work also proceed in an *a priori* manner (see 2.91 nn. 1772–82, ed. Marietti, 2:260a–262a).

[88] Collins notes of the arguments from *De spiritualibus creaturis* that they are "mainly aprioristic without appealing to an emanationist view of necessary intermediaries" (*Philosophy of the Angels*, 39).

[89] Thomas examines the probative force of reasoning *ex suppositione* in the context of considering the methodology of the natural sciences which depend upon such reasoning. His concern in these texts is to show that even though the natural sciences reason in this manner, they nevertheless can still be demonstrative. See *Expositio libri Posteriorum* 1.16, Editio Leonina 1*/2:60, lines 97–106; *Expositio libri Posteriorum* 2.7, 1*/2:198, lines 17–48; *Expositio libri Posteriorum* 2.9, 1*/2:208–9, lines 226–66; and *Commentaria in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis* 2.15 n. 2, Editio Leonina 2:98. Regarding Thomas's defense of *ex suppositione* reasoning in the sciences, see William Wallace, "Aquinas on the Temporal Relation Between Cause and Effect," *Review of Metaphysics* 27 (1974): 569–84; and Wallace,

From all of the foregoing, I would conjecture that Thomas views these arguments as what he would term "demonstrations *quia*"—arguments proving simply *that* angels exist but not *why*. For even though these arguments reason in an *a priori* manner from cause to effect, they do not reason from the proximate or proper cause of the existence of angels. The form of the universe, for example, does not alone account for the necessity of the conclusion that angels exist. From what we have seen, Thomas considers the proper cause of the diversity of creatures to be God's wisdom, in accord with which he freely chooses to create. And even though we can come to know *that* the divine wisdom is this proper cause, according to Thomas we cannot know this cause as it is in itself. For the divine wisdom is identical with the divine essence, of which we cannot have quidditative knowledge in this lifetime.[90] Thus, I would contend that if Thomas considers these arguments to be demonstrations at all, he would have to consider them to be demonstrations *quia*.

Whether or not we agree that any of Thomas's arguments for the existence of angels are in fact demonstrative, this much is clear: Thomas himself attributes strong probative force to at least some of them. In this respect, he differs from later scholastics such as Scotus and Ockham. Although both of these thinkers are willing to offer philosophical considerations of the angels, they do not offer arguments for the existence of angels, focusing on other issues instead.[91] By comparison, then, Thomas exhibits a greater optimism regarding what philosophy can reveal about the angels. His arguments from perfection, moreover, reveal more than his mere conclusion that angels exist. They reveal something of his fundamental views regarding the metaphysical structure of the universe. For Thomas, this realm of finite being must contain certain parts—Cajetan's

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"Albert Magnus on Suppositional Necessity in the Natural Sciences," in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences*, ed. James A. Weisheipl (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 103–11.

[90] As he explains, just as we cannot know in this lifetime *what* God is but only *that* he is, so too we cannot know of a divine attribute such as God's wisdom *what* it is but only *that* it is (*Super Boetium De Trinitate* 1.4 ad 10, Editio Leonina 50:91, lines 189–200).

[91] The metaphysical issue that Scotus is above all interested in concerns the individuation of angels; see Giorgio Pini, "The Individuation of Angels from Bonaventure to Duns Scotus," in this volume. Ockham examines the essence-existence composition of angels and angelic individuation; see Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of Its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies 1999), 340–53. Both philosophers, moreover, dedicate ample space to questions about angelic time, location, knowledge, and communication. But neither offers rational arguments for the existence of angels.

"grades of being"—that are on the one hand freely created by God and yet on the other necessary, given that he has chosen to create. For Thomas, the angels are just such parts. In his words, "Every single one of the separate substances is a principal part of the universe, much more so than either the sun or the moon. For each of them is its own species and is more noble than any species whatsoever of corporeal things."[92]

[92] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.98 n. 1832, ed. Marietti, 2:269b. For the Latin, see note 67 above.

METAPHYSICAL COMPOSITION OF ANGELS IN BONAVENTURE, AQUINAS, AND GODFREY OF FONTAINES

John F. Wippel

Christian thinkers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were much concerned with protecting the absolute simplicity of God and, in their effort to support this point, by way of contrast often attributed some kind of composition to all created entities. By the mid-1280s, very different ways of doing this had been proposed by different philosophers and theologians. One widely held position maintained that in all created substances other than God there is a composition of matter and form—of a corporeal matter and a corporeal form in the case of corporeal entities, and of a spiritual kind of matter and a spiritual form in the case of purely spiritual beings such as angels and human souls according to some, or of one and the same kind of matter in both corporeal entities and in spirits according to others. Another position appealed to some version of a distinction and composition, originally proposed by Boethius, between *quod est* and *esse* in all beings with the exception of God, even though this distinction and composition was interpreted in widely divergent ways by different thinkers. Still other thinkers insisted that one could adequately defend the non-simple character of substances other than God without appealing to any real distinction and composition either of matter and form or of essence and existence (*esse*) within them. The present chapter will consider these three positions successively in three different sections as they were developed by Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, and Godfrey of Fontaines.

1. *Matter-Form Composition of Angels: St. Bonaventure*

The first theory, widely accepted by the mid-thirteenth century, is often referred to as universal hylomorphism, that is, the claim that in all beings with the exception of God there is a distinction and composition of form and matter. The historical origins of this theory were disputed in the thirteenth century and, for that matter, continue to be subject to some dispute today. On the one hand, certain defenders of this position, especially among the Franciscans, attempted to trace it back to Saint Augustine

and contrasted this and other Augustinian positions with the dangerous innovations which, they maintained, had recently been introduced into Christian thought by thinkers such as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Certain modern scholars, especially Roberto Zavalloni, agree that the theory is indeed Augustinian in origin.[1] On the other hand, various thirteenth-century figures, including Albert and Aquinas, maintained that its true originator was the Spanish-Jewish philosopher Avicebron (Ibn Gabirol), who, writing in Arabic, produced an influential work known by its Latin title as the *Fons vitae* which had been translated into Latin in the twelfth century, and in which this theory is developed.[2]

In his Commentary on Book II of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, distinction 3, part 1, while considering the natural attributes of angels, Bonaventure introduces the issue of the simplicity of angelic essences by raising three questions: (1) whether an angel is simple, or composed of matter and form; (2) if it is granted that it is composed of matter and form, whether the matter present in spirits is essentially the same as that found

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[1] Roberto Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des formes: textes inédits et étude critique* (Leuven: Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1951), 422. While he recognizes the influence of Avicebron on the doctrine of universal hylomorphism, he denies that it is preponderant and cites Thomas of York in his effort to show that Augustine's influence was more direct and decisive (see 442–43). Also see Gonsalvus of Spain, *Quaestiones disputatae* 11, ed. Leon Amorós, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 9 (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1935), 221, who attributes this theory to Augustine.

[2] For the second view, see Erich Kleineidam, "Das Problem der hylomorphen Zusammensetzung der geistigen Substanzen im 13. Jahrhundert, behandelt bis Thomas von Aquin" (Ph.D. diss., Schlesische Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität zu Breslau, 1930), 14, who cites Albert's *In Sent.* 2.1.A.4, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris: Vivès, 1890–1899), 27:14b, as does James Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus and Universal Hylomorphism: Avicebron. A Note on Thirteenth-Century Augustinianism," in *Albert the Great: Commemorative Essays*, ed. and with an introduction by Francis J. Kovach and Robert W. Shahan (Norman: University of Oklahama Press, 1980), 239–60, at 256. In this reference, Albert identifies the title of Avicebron's work (*Fons vitae*) but assigns it to Plato. For Aquinas's explicit identification of its author as Avicebron see below. See Kleineidam, "Das Problem," 7–8, 11–14, and Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus," 244–49, for their assessments of the respective influences of Avicebron and his translator, Gundisalvi, on the development of universal hylomorphism in the Latin West in the early thirteenth century. Also see Odon Lottin, "La composition hylémorphique des substances spirituelles: Les débuts de la controverse," *Revue néoscolastique de Philosophie* 34 (1932): 21–41. For a helpful update on recent literature concerning the identity, life, and writings of Dominicus Gundissalinus, see Alexander Fidora, *Die Wissenschaftstheorie des Dominicus Gundissalinus: Voraussetzungen und Konsequenzen des zweiten Anfangs der aristotelischen Philosophie im 12. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003), 12–19, 195–96 (his philosophical writings and his translations).

in corporeal things; and (3) whether this matter is also numerically one and the same, or identical in some other way.[3]

Bonaventure introduces q. 1 ("Whether in angels there is a composition of diverse natures, namely, of matter and form") by offering four arguments in support of such composition, followed by four for the opposed position.[4] Since in his response he will ultimately decide in favor of some such composition, I will begin by considering some of the opening arguments. The first is based on the consequences that follow from the fact that things are changeable. This argument reasons that nothing changeable is simple. But by its nature, an angel is changeable. Therefore, it is composed. To show that an angel is composed of matter, the argument continues. In everything that changes, there must be a principle of mutability. But a principle of mutability is matter. Therefore, etc. While the first premise of this sub-argument is proposed as evident, Augustine and Boethius are cited in support of its second premise ("a principle of mutability is matter"). In Book XII of the *Confessions*, Augustine writes that every changeable thing implies a certain absence of form (*informitatem*) whereby a form is received, or changed, or converted (*vertitur*). And in his *De Trinitate*, c. 2, Boethius writes that nothing which is form alone can receive accidents, and that a form does not receive accidents unless matter underlies it.[5] Bonaventure also comments that if someone objects that mutability belongs to things by reason of the fact that they are [created] *ex nihilo*, a defender of this argument will respond that mutability is not a pure privation, but that it is some kind of positing (*aliquam positionem*). Therefore, it has as its cause not pure privation but a cause that posits in some way, although not in the absolute sense, and therefore

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[3] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1, *Opera omnia* (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1882–1902) 2:88b.

[4] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:89a: "Quaeritur . . . utrum in Angelo sit compositio ex diversis naturis, scilicet ex materia et forma."

[5] For Bonaventure, see ibid. For Augustine, see *Confessionum Libri XIII*, 12.19.28, ed. Lucas Verheijen, CCL 27:230. For Boethius, see "formae vero subiectae esse non possunt. Nam quod ceterae formae [praeter Deum] subiectae accidentibus sunt, ut humanitas, non ita accidentia suscipit eo quod ipsa est, sed eo quod materia ei subiecta est," *De Trinitate*, c. 2, in Boethius, *The Theological Tractates*, ed. Hugh F. Stewart, Edward K. Rand, and S. J. Tester (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 10, line 43 – p. 12, line 46. Bonaventure's citation of Boethius is not quite literal. For presentations of this argument, see Étienne Gilson, *La philosophie de saint Bonaventure*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1953), 198–99; John F. Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), 143; and David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 96.

that is neither "something" in the absolute sense nor "nothing"; rather, it falls between something (*aliquid*) and nothing (*nihil*). And this Augustine calls matter.[6]

Bonaventure cites a second argument based on the nature of action and passion and the principle that one and the same thing cannot act and be acted on in the same respect. But an angel both acts and is acted upon and must, therefore, have distinct principles by reason of which it acts and is acted upon. A principle by reason of which it acts is a form, whereas a principle by reason of which it is acted upon can only be matter. While the major of this argument is proposed as evident, in support of the minor the argument recalls that it pertains to an angel both to receive illuminations and to give them, presumably to other angels and to humans.[7]

Third, another argument for this is based on the nature of individuation. Angels are distinct hypostases, even though they do not differ by reason of different originating principles. But numerical distinction derives from an intrinsic and substantial principle because, if all accidents are set aside, numerical distinction remains. But such distinction cannot come from the side of form and must, therefore, derive from a material principle. While this argument presents its major as self evident, it turns to a text from Aristotle's *De caelo* to support the minor. As Bonaventure phrases it: "When I speak of 'heaven,' I speak of form; but when I speak of 'this heaven,' I speak of matter."[8]

After presenting some counterarguments, Bonaventure offers his formal response. It must be held as certain that an angel does not have a simple essence completely devoid of composition (*per privationem omnis compositionis*), for it is certain that an angel is composed in different ways. Thus, it may be viewed variously: (1) in relation to its cause (*principium*), and thus is composed insofar as it depends upon that principle (God). Its principle (and cause) is most simple and most absolute, and therefore everything that depends upon it falls into composition of some type. (2) An angel can be considered by viewing the cause-effect relationship in the opposite direction, that is, by considering it in relation to the effects it produces; so viewed, it is composed of substance and an [operative]

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[6] For Augustine, see *Conf.* 12.3.3 (CCL 27:218); 12.6.6 (CCL 27:219), cited in Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:89a, note 4.

[7] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:89a–b.

[8] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:89a–b: "Cum dico caelum, dico formam; cum dico *hoc* caelum, dico materiam." For Aristotle, see *De Caelo* 1.9.278a11–16.

power (*potentia*), that is, of substance and accident. (3) An angel may be considered as falling within a genus and hence, according to the metaphysician, is composed of act and potency; but, according to the logician, it must be composed of genus and difference. (4) It may be considered as a being (*ens*) in itself and so, (i) as regards its actual existence (*esse*), there is a composition in it of being (*ens*) and of *esse*; (ii) as regards its essential existence (*esse*), there is a composition in it of *quod est* and *quo est* (see the Boethian distinction); (iii) and as regards its individual or personal existence (*esse*), there is in it a composition of *quod est* and *quis est* ("what it is" and "who it is"). To say that an angelic essence is simple is not to deny that it is composed in these different ways.[9]

In light of the various kinds of composition Bonaventure has just assigned to angels, one may wonder why he is not content simply to appeal to these in order to show that an angel is composed and therefore falls short of the divine simplicity. In fact, however, he is not content to do this, but goes on to argue for the presence of matter-form composition in all angels as well. He recalls from some of his opening arguments that within the nature of an angel, mutability must be present, not only with respect to nonexistence (*non esse*) but also with respect to other characteristics (*proprietates*). This, in turn, implies that the capacity to be acted upon (*passibilitas*) must also be present, as well as a ground (*ratio*) for individuation and limitation. All of this points ultimately to the presence of essential composition within the proper nature of an angel.[10] Given all of this, Bonaventure writes that he sees no cause or reason that would lead one to deny that the substance of an angel is composed of diverse natures, just as is true of the essence of every creature that is an *ens per se*. And if the essence of an angel is composed of diverse natures, Bonaventure notes that these natures must be related to one another as the actual and the potential (*possibilis*), that is to say, as matter and form. He concludes somewhat cautiously, therefore, that this position—that there is

[9] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:90b–91a. Note in particular: "Item, habet considerari ut ens in se; et sic quantum ad esse actuale est in ipso compositio entis et esse, quantum ad esse essentiale ex 'quo est' et 'quod est,' quantum ad esse individuale sive personale sic 'quod est' et 'quis est.' Cum igitur angelica essentia dicitur simplex, hoc non est per privationem harum compositionum." For another interesting presentation of different kinds of composition, see his defense of the divine simplicity in *In Sent.* 1.8.2.2, *Opera omnia* 1:168a. For discussion see Gilson, *La philosophie de Saint Bonaventure*, 197–98; Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 144–45.

[10] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:91a.

matter-form composition in angels—"seems to be truer" than any view that denies this.[11]

With this point established, Bonaventure now turns to the second question he had raised above: If it is granted that an angel is composed of matter and form, as he has now determined, is the matter of spiritual and corporeal things the same essentially (*per essentiam*)?[12] After presenting opening arguments both in support of and against this claim, he begins his formal response by noting that, concerning this issue, the wise seem to be opposed to the wise, and that great and profound clerics in theology and in philosophy have differed concerning it. Some have held that the matter of spiritual and the matter of corporeal things differ and have nothing in common except by analogy. Others held that the matter of both is one and the same essentially. But, Bonaventure comments, if someone carefully considers which of these positions is more probable and true and takes into account the arguments supporting each, he will see that both views speak the truth by using different approaches.[13]

Bonaventure accounts for this diversity of positions by tracing them back to two different ways in which matter can be known, that is, by privation and by analogy. One knows matter by privation by first removing (mentally) from matter any form, then what disposes for a form, and finally by considering the naked essence of matter in itself as an intelligible darkness. Knowledge by analogy, however, is based on a similarity of relationships. And the relationship of matter is in terms of potency. But the potency of matter can be related to form in two ways, either (1) insofar as matter provides a support for form under the aspect of being, and it is considered in this way by the metaphysician; or (2) insofar as it provides a support for form under the aspect of what is mobile, and it is considered in this way by the natural philosopher.[14]

Now, those who consider matter by viewing it as a privation of every form, both substantial and accidental, held that in corporeal things and in

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[11] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:91a: "non video causam nec rationem quomodo defendi potest, quin substantia Angeli sit composita ex diversis naturis, et essentia omnis creaturae per se entis; et si composita est ex diversis naturis, illae duae naturae se habent per modum *actualis* et *possibilis*, et ita materiae et formae. Et ideo illa positio videtur verior esse, scilicet quod in Angelo sit compositio ex materia et forma."

[12] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.1, *Opera omnia* 2:88b: "Secundo, dato quod sic, quaeritur utrum eadem sit materia in spiritualibus et corporalibus per essentiam." See *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1.2, *Opera omnia* 2:94a.

[13] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1.2, *Opera omnia* 2:96a.

[14] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1.2, *Opera omnia* 2:96a–b.

spiritual things matter is the same essentially.[15] But those who considered matter by means of analogy, that is to say, under the aspect of potentiality insofar as matter provides a support for form in terms of being, said that the matter of spiritual things and corporeal things is the same only according to analogy, because a similar relationship is involved in each case. Just as the matter of corporeal things sustains and gives existence and subsistence to corporeal forms, so does the matter of spiritual things do the same for spiritual forms. Bonaventure remarks that those who follow this approach did not hold that matter as found in these different kinds of substances is one and the same properly (*proprie*) speaking, because the matter of corporeal things is not of such a nature as to support spiritual forms, nor conversely is the matter of spiritual things of such a nature as to support corporeal forms.[16] In sum, he holds that defenders of these two approaches speak truthfully by following their respective ways of understanding the nature of matter itself.[17]

But then he himself introduces another way in which he tries to harmonize these different answers to the same fundamental question, this time by distinguishing between the approaches of the natural philosopher, the "universal physicist," and the metaphysician insofar as each of these resolves the things they study to a material principle. The natural philosopher (*physicus inferior*) studies generation and corruption and reduces these to matter insofar as it is a principle of generation and corruption. This occurs only in lower bodies. Because all such bodies can be changed into one another, he concludes that the matter of generable and corruptible things is the same. The "universal" or "higher physicist" considers matter as changeable with respect to form and to position and thus finds the same potentiality (*passio*) in lower (terrestrial) bodies and in higher (heavenly) bodies for change with respect to position, that is, the divisibility of what is mobile, which has matter as its principle. Because of this he resolves what he studies back to the matter of every corporeal thing and concludes that the matter of all bodies—corruptible and incorruptible—is one and the same. But the metaphysician considers the nature of every creature, especially of every substance (*ens per se*), in which he considers

[15] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.2, *Opera omnia* 2:96b.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.2, *Opera omnia* 2:97a: "Ex hoc patet ratio diversitatis et via positionum, et quod verum dicunt secundum diversas vias et secundum diversos modos intelligendi . . . Nec est contradictio, si quis recte intelligat utrumque." On this, see Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 146–47.

both the act of being (*actus essendi*), which form gives, and the stability of existing *per se*, which is given by that in which the form inheres, that is to say, by matter. Because to exist *per se* expresses something common to spiritual things and to corporeal things, the metaphysician asserts the unity of matter in all *per se entia* or substances.[18]

Because the metaphysician judges in a more excellent way than does the natural philosopher, Bonaventure concludes that those who defended the same matter in spiritual and corporeal things judged better, even though both they and those who denied this, by following their own approaches and methods, arrived at the truth.[19]

Having clarified his thinking on this issue, Bonaventure now returns to the third of the three questions he had raised at the beginning: If one grants that the matter of corporeal and incorporeal things is one and the same, is it numerically one and the same or only according to some other kind of unity?[20] After presenting some opening arguments for and against this claim, Bonaventure begins his response by noting that it was and is the view of philosophers and students of nature (*positio philosophorum et physicorum*) that wherever matter is present, it is essentially one and numerically one. They maintain this because, regarding what matter itself is, it is being entirely in potency (*ens omnino in potentia*). And wherever this is found, it is numerically one and the same in virtue of its essence.[21]

Bonaventure comments that this argument is sound. Because matter is entirely being in potency, of its essence it enjoys no act, no form, and, therefore, no distinction. If it has no distinction in and of itself and yet is not pure nothingness, it must be one without multiplicity of any kind. This is to say that it is numerically one.[22]

Bonaventure returns briefly to the issue of matter-form composition of angels in his final work, his *Collationes in Hexaëmeron* of 1273.[23] There, in Vision I, *Collatio I* (of the Delorme edition), he lists six major divisions which assist one in arriving at knowledge of things. The fifth is that

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[18] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1.2, *Opera omnia* 2:97a–b.

[19] Ibid. He also comments that the opening arguments prove that the matter of spiritual and corporeal entities is the same, and he cites Augustine in support but refers to what is now recognized as a pseudo-Augustinian work—*De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* (see p. 98a, referring back to p. 94a, arg. 1). On this, see Quinn, *Historical Constitution*, 148, note 26.

[20] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:88b.

[21] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1.3, *Opera omnia* 2:100a–b.

[22] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1.3, *Opera omnia* 2:100b.

[23] For the dating, see Jacques Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure* (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1964), 177.

between the simple and the composite. Bonaventure refers to some who have said that some creature, namely, an angel, is simple. Bonaventure objects that if it were true that an angel were a form without any matter, then it could be subject to no accidents. As he had done in his Commentary on Book II of the *Sentences*, in support he again cites from Boethius's *De Trinitate*, c. 2, to the effect that forms are not the subjects of accidents. And he adds that, according to Aristotle in *Physics* I, it is matter together with form that is the cause of accidents.[24] Bonaventure comments that it is imprudent to say that an angel is simple, lest something that is unique to the First Principle might seem to be attributed to an angel, namely, to be a pure act and form. He adds that it is less dangerous to err about the simplicity of an angel than to assign to other things something that belongs to God alone. Therefore, he maintains that nothing except God is completely simple.[25]

2. *Essence-Esse Composition of Angels: St. Thomas Aquinas*

As we shall now see, Thomas Aquinas dealt with this issue, including the challenge to his own position laid down by Bonaventure, on numerous occasions. Here I will limit myself to his initial development of his position in a work dating from the beginning of his teaching career at Paris in the early 1250s (*De ente et essentia*), to an application in his mature *Summa contra Gentiles* II of a procedure he had developed in Stage Two of his argumentation in the *De ente*, and to a very full treatment in another work dating from his final years (*De substantiis separatis*).

2.1. *De ente et essentia*

It is fairly generally agreed that Thomas's Commentary on the *Sentences* dates from 1252–1256, and Jean-Pierre Torrell has further specified that its oral delivery can be dated from 1252–1254, and that Thomas was still working on his written version when he became a Master in Theology in 1256. The *De ente* is also placed within the 1252–1256 period, and some

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[24] For Boethius, see above, note 5.

[25] See Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron* 1.1 n. 12, ed. Ferdinand Delorme, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 8 (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1934), 54. Note especially: "Unde incautum est hoc dicere, ne id quod est solius Primi, scilicet quod sit purus actus et forma, videatur attribui angelo; et minus etiam est periculum errare circa angeli simplicitatem quam aliquid, quod est solius Dei, alii assignare. Unde dicimus quod nihil omnino est simplex nisi Deus."

effort has been made to correlate it chronologically with the completion of a particular part of the Commentary on the *Sentences*. But this attempt at further specification has not been widely accepted, and it seems wiser to regard the two works as contemporaneous with one another. However, Torrell has noted that Gauthier did propose a date of 1252/1253 for it.[26] Because of the finished and self-contained character of his discussion of our issue in this work, here I will follow Thomas's treatment in the *De ente* and will make occasional reference to his discussion in his Commentary on II *Sentences*, dist. 3, q. 1, a. 1.

Thomas introduces c. 4 of this treatise by indicating that he must now determine how essence is realized in separate substances, including the human soul, intelligences (= Christian angels), and the First Cause (God). While he recognizes that "all" grant the simplicity of the First Cause, some attempt to introduce matter-form composition into intelligences and into the human soul. He identifies Avicebron as the likely author of this position in his *Fons vitae*.[27]

Thomas immediately comments that this view is opposed to the position generally held by the philosophers, who refer to these substances as separate from matter and who also prove that they are free from matter. Their most effective argument to establish this, he continues, is based on the presence within them of the power of understanding. But forms are not actually intelligible except insofar as they are separated from matter and its conditions; and they are made intelligible only through the power of an intelligent substance insofar as they are received in it and acted on by it. Therefore, he quickly concludes, in every intelligent substance there must be complete freedom from matter so that such a substance neither includes matter as a part of itself nor is a form impressed on matter, as are the forms of purely corporeal entities.[28]

Thomas then considers a possible objection to his position. Someone might claim that it is not every kind of matter that impedes intelligibility, but only corporeal matter. Against this he argues that if that were true, since matter is not said to be corporeal except insofar as it is subject to a corporeal form, matter would derive its capacity to impede intelligibility

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[26] See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1: *The Person and His Work* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 332 and 425 (Commentary on the *Sentences*), 47–48 and 435 (*De ente*).

[27] Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina (Rome, 1882ff.) 43:375a. For a similar identification, see *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1, ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 2:86.

[28] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:375b–376a.

from a corporeal form. He rejects this because even a corporeal form is actually intelligible insofar as it is abstracted from matter.[29] He concludes that there can be no matter-form composition either of the human soul, or of an intelligence (angel). He immediately points out, however, that there is a composition in them of form and of existence (*esse*). In support he cites from the *Liber de causis* (prop. 9, Commentary) to the effect that "an intelligence has form and *esse*." Thomas understands the term "form" as it appears in this text as signifying a simple quiddity or nature.[30]

In supporting this claim, Thomas explains that when one thing is related to another as its cause, the cause may exist without the effect, but not vice versa. But form is related to matter in such fashion that it gives *esse* to matter. (It should be noted that this is not to say that form is the efficient cause of the existence of matter, but the formal cause.) While it is not possible for matter to exist without form, it is not impossible in principle for some form to exist without matter. If some forms are found which can only exist in matter, this is because those forms are ontologically far removed in perfection from the First Principle, which is the First and Pure Act. Therefore, those forms that are closest in perfection to the First Principle subsist *per se* without matter. Such forms are intelligences, and the essences or quiddities of such substances are in fact identical with the forms themselves.[31]

Thomas points out that the essence of a composite substance differs from that of a simple substance in that the essence of the composite includes both form and matter, while the essence of the simple substance is form alone. And from this two other differences follow. The first is that the essence of a composite substance can be signified either as a whole (e.g., a human being) or as a part (humanity) which, Thomas says, follows from the designation of matter which enables it to individuate a form and make it *this* form. As a consequence, the essence of a composite substance cannot be predicated of the composite thing itself as a part, but only as a whole. One cannot say that a man such as Socrates is his

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[29] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376a.

[30] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376a. Note especially: "Sed est ibi compositio forme et esse; unde in commento none propositionis libri De causis dicitur quod intelligentia est habens formam et esse." See *Liber de causis*, ed. Adriaan Pattin, sep. publication by *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* (Leuven: Tijdschrift voor Filosofie, 1966), 69: "Et intelligentia est habens *yliathim* quoniam est esse et forma." On the meaning of *yliatim*, see Richard Taylor, "St. Thomas and the *Liber de causis* on the Hylomorphic Composition of Separate Substances," *Mediaeval Studies* 41 (1979): 506–13, at 510–13.

[31] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376a.

quiddity, although one can say that he is a man. But the essence of a simple substance, which is identical with its form, can only be signified as a whole since there is nothing in such a substance in addition to its form which might receive and individuate it. Hence, it can be predicated of the simple substance no matter how the essence is understood. Thomas finds confirmation for this in a statement taken from Avicenna's *Metaphysica*: "quidditas simplicis est ipsummet simplex."[32]

The second difference following from the distinction between the essence of a composite substance and that of a simple substance is that because the essences (forms) of composite substances are received in designated matter, they are multiplied in accord with the division of matter. From this it follows that while remaining the same in species, they differ numerically within one and the same species. Because the essence of a simple substance is not received in matter, such substances cannot be multiplied numerically within one and the same species. In their case, there are as many species as there are individuals, a position which Thomas also finds in Avicenna, and a position which would be so controversial that it would be cited three times among the 220 propositions condemned by Bishop Stephen Tempier on 7 March 1277.[33]

Next Thomas must deal with the threat to divine simplicity that seems to arise from his rejection of matter-form composition of angelic substances. He counters that while they are forms alone and without matter, perfect simplicity (*omnimoda simplicitas*) is not present in them, and they are not pure act but do have an admixture of potentiality. With this he introduces what I will present as a three-stage argument to show that such beings, along with everything else created by God, are composed of

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[32] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376b: "Sed essentia rei simplicis que est sua forma non potest significari nisi ut totum, cum nichil sit ibi preter formam quasi formam recipiens; et ideo quocumque modo sumatur essentia substantie simplicis, de ea predicatur. Vnde Auicenna dicit quod 'quiditas simplicis est ipsummet simplex,' quia non est aliquid aliud recipiens ipsam." For Avicenna, see *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina* 5.5, ed. Simone Van Riet (Leuven: Peeters; Leiden: Brill, 1980), Avicenna Latinus 4:274: "Quidditas autem omnis simplicis est ipsummet simplex."

[33] For Thomas, see *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376b. For Avicenna, see *Liber de philosophia prima* 5.2, Avicenna Latinus 4:239–40. For the prohibited propositions concerning this, see David Piché, ed., *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277: texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire* (Paris: Vrin, 1999), art. 81 (p. 104): "Quod, quia intelligentiae non habent materiam, Deus non posset plures eiusdem speciei facere"; art. 96 (p. 108): "Quod Deus non potest multiplicare individua sub una specie sine materia"; art. 191 (p. 138): "Quod formae non recipient divisionem, nisi per materiam.—Error, nisi intelligatur de formis eductis de potentia materiae."

two distinct principles, an essence and an act of existing (*esse*), which themselves are united as potency and act.[34]

The first stage of this argument is often referred to as an *intellectus essentiae* argument:

> Whatever is not included in the understanding (*intellectus*) of an essence or quiddity comes to it from without and enters into composition with it, because no essence can be understood without those things which are parts of its essence. But every essence or quiddity can be understood without anything being understood about its existence (*esse*); for I can understand what a man is or what a phoenix is and yet not know whether it exists in reality. Therefore it is evident that existence (*esse*) is other than quiddity.[35]

This argument moves very quickly, but it calls for some comment, especially if it is viewed as a complete argument in itself. First of all, it seems to reason from the difference between knowing *what* something is and knowing *that* it is to an ontological distinction within such beings themselves. But it is difficult to see how this move can be justified. It seems rather to rest on the distinction between two operations on the part of the intellect, one whereby one understands *what* something is, and a second, which today is usually referred to as judgment, whereby we recognize *that* it is. Thomas himself clearly makes this distinction, for instance, in his Commentary on the *De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3.[36] But this in and of itself hardly justifies one's positing the distinction of two ontologically distinct principles within such an entity. Second, as Fernand Van Steenberghen has

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[34] The proper interpretation of this argument continues to be disputed by various Thomistic scholars, but here I will present it according to my own understanding of the text, and will give references in the notes to other interpretations. Thomas's introduction of the argument merits quotation, since it tells the reader that the argument will not be completed until it reaches its goal, establishing the potency-act composition of such substances: "Huiusmodi ergo substantie, quamuis sint forme tantum sine materia, non tamen in eis est omnimoda simplicitas nec sunt actus purus, sed habent permixtionem potentie; et hoc sic patet" (*De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376b). For other and more extensive presentations of my interpretation of Thomas's argumentation, see my *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), ch. 5, 107–32; and my *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 137–50.

[35] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376b: "Quicquid enim non est de intellectu essentie uel quiditatis, hoc est adueniens extra et faciens compositionem cum essentia, quia nulla essentia sine hiis que sunt partes essentie intelligi potest. Omnis autem essentia uel quiditas potest intelligi sine hoc quod aliquid intelligatur de esse suo: possum enim intelligere quid est homo uel fenix et tamen ignorare an esse habeat in rerum natura; ergo patet quod esse est aliud ab essentia uel quiditate." For similar reasoning, see Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1, ed. Mandonnet, 2:87.

[36] Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 5.3, Editio Leonina 50:147a.

pointed out, within this text Thomas seems to understand *esse* in two different ways. When he refers to the possibility for someone to understand what a man or a phoenix is without knowing that it is (*sine hoc quod aliquid intelligatur de esse suo*) he is using *esse* as signifying that something exists. But in the conclusion, he is taking it as referring to the intrinsic act of existing that he finds in every existing substance. It is difficult to understand how this step in the argument can be justified.[37]

But then he immediately introduces a qualification and what I take as the second major stage in his overall argument: "Unless, perhaps there is some thing whose quiddity is its *esse* itself." He immediately goes on to argue that there could at most be one such being, that is, a being in which essence and act of existing are identical. This step warns the reader that Thomas must not have regarded the first stage of the argument as conclusive, and it also suggests that the second stage of the argument is extremely important; indeed, that it is essential to the entire argument as such. Unfortunately, the majority of recent and contemporary interpreters of Aquinas have failed to understand and appreciate the importance of this step, although there are some happy exceptions.[38]

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[37] See Fernand Van Steenberghen, *Le problème de l'existence de Dieu dans les écrits de s. Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1980), 37–38, 41–42. For some others who reject the argumentation in this first stage as demonstrative, see Joseph Owens, "Quiddity and Real Distinction in St. Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1965): 1–22, at 8–14; Owens, "Stages and Distinction in *De ente*: A Rejoinder," *The Thomist* 45 (1981): 99–123, at 107–8; Armand Maurer, "Dialectic in the *De ente et essentia* of St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Roma, magistra mundi: Itineraria culturae medievalis. Mélanges offerts au Père L. E. Boyle à l'occasion de son 75e anniversaire*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1998), 2:573–83 (who argues that in this treatise Thomas only intended to offer dialectical arguments for the real distinction and composition of essence and *esse* in creatures, not demonstrations); and R. E. Houser, "The Real Distinction and the Principles of Metaphysics: Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas," in *Laudemus viros gloriosos: Essays in Honor of Armand Maurer, CSB*, ed. R. E. Houser (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 97–108, at 97–98, who agrees. For some who think that Aquinas's argument does at this point establish a real or ontological distinction between essence and *esse*, see Cornelio Fabro, "Un itinéraire de saint Thomas: l'établissement de la distinction réelle entre essence et existence," *Revue de philosophie* 39 (1939): 285–310, repr. in his *Esegesi tomistica* (Rome: Libreria editrice della Pontificia Università lateranense), 89–108, where he refers to this stage as a logical argument; Joseph Bobik, *Aquinas on Being and Essence* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965); and Lawrence Dewan, "Saint Thomas, Joseph Owens, and the Real Distinction between Essence and Existence," *The Modern Schoolman* 61 (1984): 145–65, at 145–56.

[38] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, 376b–377a: "Nisi forte sit aliqua res cuius quiditas sit ipsum esse, et hec res non potest esse nisi una et prima . . ." Failure to understand and appreciate the second stage is a weakness in most of the authors mentioned above in note 37, with the exception of Fabro, who seems to regard what I call three stages of one argu-

It should be noted that at this point Thomas does not assume that such a being exists.[39] He has written "Unless perhaps" such a being exists. He then proceeds to show that at most there could be one such being. He writes that it is not possible for anything to be multiplied except in one of three ways: (1) by the addition of some difference, as a generic nature is multiplied in species; (2) or in the way that a form is received in different instances of matter, as a specific nature is multiplied in different individuals; (3) or by reason of its being in one case absolute (that is, unreceived) and in all other cases being received in some subject, as if, for instance, there were a certain heat that existed apart from any receiving subject, which by reason of that very separation would be distinct from any instance of heat that was not separated from a receiving subject.[40]

Supposing, he continues, that there was some thing which was pure *esse* so as to be subsisting *esse*, it could not be multiplied in the first way. It could not be differentiated by a specific difference, for then it would not be pure *esse* alone, but *esse* plus a differentiating form. Nor, he continues, could it be divided in the second way by being received in different instances of matter, for then it would not be subsisting *esse*, but *esse* plus matter. Therefore, by process of elimination, he concludes that such a thing that is identical with its *esse* can only be one because, without explicitly stating this, he has accepted the third alternative. There can at most be one case of unreceived and subsisting *esse*. And he explicitly reaches this conclusion by drawing a contrast: it is necessary, in every other thing apart from that one possible exception, that its *esse* and its

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ment as three different arguments, with the first being logical and the second and third ontological. For another who has appreciated the important role of stage two in the argument, see Scott MacDonald, "The *Esse/Essentia* Argument in Aquinas's *De ente et essentia*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 22 (1984): 157–72. For another who recognizes the importance of this stage, but rejects its validity because in his view it is guilty of begging the question, see David Twetten, "Really Distinguishing Essence from *Esse*," in *Wisdom's Apprentice: Thomistic Essays in Honor of Lawrence Dewan, O.P.*, ed. Peter A. Kwasniewski (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 40–84, esp. 49–53.

[39] Unlike his procedure here, in his argument in *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1, ed. Mandonnet, 2:87, Thomas does assume that God exists, but with reason, since he has dealt with this in *In Sent.* 1.3 (*Div. primae partis textus*), ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 1:88–89.

[40] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376b–377a: "quia impossibile est ut fiat plurificatio alicuius nisi per additionem alicuius differentie, sicut multiplicatur natura generis in species; uel per hoc quod forma recipitur in diuersis materiis, sicut multiplicatur natura speciei in diuersis indiuiduis; uel per hoc quod unum est absolutum et aliud in aliquo receptum, sicut si esset quidam calor separatus esset alius a calore non separato ex ipsa sua separatione."

quiddity (or nature or form) be other, that is to say, that they be distinct.[41] And only then does he apply this universal conclusion to the case at hand, that is, to intelligences: it follows that in an intelligence an act of existing (*esse*) must be present in addition to its essence, and he again repeats the formula he had taken earlier from the *Liber de causis*: "An intelligence is both form and *esse*."[42] It should be noted that throughout this stage of his argument he has been using the word "esse" consistently to signify an intrinsic act of existing, and thereby has avoided any ambiguity involved in using it to signify the fact of existing and then to signify an intrinsic act of existing.

Until this point he has neither assumed nor proved that the single exception he has already discussed actually exists, that is, that there is in fact one case of subsisting *esse*. But *pace* Joseph Owens, he is surely now accepting as established the presence of an ontological (real) distinction in all other beings between their essence and their act of existing (*esse*).[43] This is confirmed by his backward reference to the text from the *Liber de causis*, where he had appealed to the same text to support his claim that there must be a composition of form and *esse* in (all other) intelligences.[44] And now he goes on to use this conclusion as the starting point for a metaphysical argument to prove that such a being actually exists.

He reasons that whatever pertains to something is either caused by the principles of its nature (in the way a property such as risibility follows from the essence of a human being), or comes to it from some extrinsic principle (as light is present in air owing to the influence of the sun). But, he continues, it is not possible for the *esse* of anything to be caused efficiently by its form or quiddity, because in that case such a thing would

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41 Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:377a.

42 Ibid.

43 For references to the discussion between Owens and myself concerning this issue, see my *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 136, note 11. In brief, Owens maintains that neither stage one nor stage two of Thomas's argument establishes real distinction between essence and existence, and that this cannot be done until after one has demonstrated the existence of God, that is, at the end of stage three. Against this I maintain that Thomas establishes the real distinction in stage two and then applies the conclusion that he has reached there—that with one possible exception essence and *esse* are really distinct in all other beings—in order to establish that all other beings, because their essence and *esse* are really distinct, receive their existence from something else, that is, they are efficiently caused.

44 Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:377a: "unde oportet quod in qualibet alia re praeter eam aliud sit esse suum et aliud quidditas vel natura seu forma sua; unde oportet quod in intelligentiis sit esse praeter formam, et ideo dictum est quod intelligentia est forma et esse."

be the efficient cause of itself, and would give existence to itself. Thomas rejects this as impossible, presumably because then such a being would exist insofar as it gave existence to itself and yet would not exist insofar as it received its existence. Therefore, he concludes that it is necessary that every such thing in which its nature is other than its *esse* must receive its *esse* from something else, which is to say that it must be efficiently caused.[45] It should be noted that this is a universal claim and that it is not restricted to intelligences.

This in turn serves as the point of departure for his brief metaphysical argument for the existence of God. That which exists by reason of something else (*per aliud*) must be traced back to that which exists *per se* as its first cause. Otherwise, one would have an infinite regress of caused causes of *esse* and, although Thomas does not pause here to explain this in detail, he maintains that unless one grants the existence of an uncaused cause of *esse*, and no matter how many intermediaries one may posit, one would ultimately not account for the existence of any of the caused beings. He concludes that there must be some thing which is the cause of existing (*causa essendi*) for all other things by reason of the fact that it is pure *esse*, that is to say, subsisting *esse* or God.[46]

Thomas's task is not yet completed, however, since he had intended to show not merely that essence and *esse* are distinct in all beings with one possible exception but, further, that in intelligences (angels) there is a composition of potency and act. He now turns to that task by noting that "whatever receives something from something else is in potency with respect to that which it receives, and that which is received in it is its act." Given this, he concludes that the quiddity or form, which an intelligence is, is itself in potency with respect to the act of existing (*esse*) that it receives from God, and that the act of existing is received as act. Potency and act are, therefore, present in intelligences or angels, although there is no matter-form composition in them unless the term "matter" is used equivocally. He also correlates the quiddity or essence of such a being as that which it is, and its received act of existing (*esse*) as that whereby it subsists in reality, and then refers back to the terminology used

[45] Ibid. Note in particular: "Ergo oportet quod omnis talis res cuius esse est aliud quam natura sua habeat esse ab alio."

[46] Ibid. On Thomas's rejection of appeal to an infinite series of caused causes of *esse* as an adequate explanation of the existence of any effect, see my *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 408–9, 423, note 63, referring to Aquinas's *In Met.* 2.3 n. 303 (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1964), 86b–87a.

by Boethius to indicate that beings of this type—intelligences or angels—are composed of "that which is" and of *esse*.[47]

In subsequent writings, Thomas always rejects matter-form composition of angels or separate substances, and constantly refers to their essence-*esse* distinction and composition to show that they are nonetheless not perfectly simple in the way that God is. Moreover, frequently he draws on reasoning similar to that which he had developed in Stage Two of his argumentation in *De ente*, c. 4, based on the impossibility of there being more than one being in which essence and *esse* are identical and concluding from this to distinction and composition of these two principles in all other beings. Often enough in these later presentations, however, and unlike his procedure in the *De ente*, he has already proved the actual existence of God earlier in the same work, or else takes this as given because of the theological nature of the particular writing. Nonetheless, the logic of a number of the arguments he presents does not require that he assume that God (subsisting *esse*) actually exists, but only that there can at most be one such being. A few of these later texts will now be considered to illustrate Thomas's procedure there.

2.2. *Summa contra Gentiles II, c. 52*

In Book II, c. 52, of this work, which may be dated ca. 1261–1262, Thomas recalls that created intellectual substances are not bodies (c. 49) or composed of matter and form but are immaterial and subsistent so that they do not depend upon bodies for their existence (c. 51). Nonetheless, he now observes, it does not follow from this that they are equal to the simplicity of God. Rather, some composition is present in them precisely because their *esse* and their *quod est* (what they are) are not identical.[48]

In his first argument in support of this, Thomas reasons that if subsisting *esse* exists, nothing can be added to it in addition to *esse* itself. Even in those things in which *esse* is not subsisting, anything present in such a thing in addition to its *esse* is indeed united to the existing thing, but is not identical with its act of existing (*esse*) except *per accidens* insofar as there is one subject that has both an act of existing (*esse*) and that which differs from its *esse.* But if *esse* is not received in some subject, there will be no

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[47] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:377b.

[48] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.52 n. 1273, ed. C. Pera, P. Marc, and P. Caramello (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1961), 2:172b: "Invenitur in eis aliqua compositio ex eo quod non est idem in eis *esse* et *quod est.*"

way whereby something that is different from *esse* can be united with it. *Esse*, insofar as it is *esse*, cannot be diverse; it can be diversified, but only by something that is different from *esse*, that is, by essence. Thus, the act of existing of a human being is different from that of a stone because they are received in diverse essences. From this he concludes that subsisting *esse* can only be one, presumably because it is not united with anything different from itself which could divide it. He recalls that in Book I (c. 22) he has already shown that God is his own *esse subsistens*. He now reasons that nothing other than God can be identical with its act of existing and concludes that, by contrast, in every other substance its act of existing and its essence (*substantia*) are different.[49]

As a third argument, Thomas reasons that it is impossible for there to be two instances of absolutely infinite *esse*; for that which is completely infinite *esse* includes the total perfection of *esse*. If such infinity were realized in two beings, nothing could be found whereby one was distinguished from the other, presumably because any distinguishing attribute would have to be missing from one of them. But, he continues, subsisting *esse* must be unlimited, because it is not limited by any receiving subject. (Here he introduces a fundamental axiom or adage of his metaphysics: that unreceived act, and hence, unreceived *esse*, is unlimited [infinite].) Given this, he concludes that it is impossible for there to be more than one subsisting *esse*, and he expects his reader again to draw the contrast and conclude that in everything else, including intellectual substances or angels, essence and *esse* are not identical.[50]

In these arguments, Thomas can and does assume the existence of God, since he has already offered what he views as demonstrative arguments to establish this conclusion in Book I, c. 13, of the *Summa contra Gentiles*. But both arguments move from the uniqueness of subsisting *esse* or God to the distinction and composition of essence and *esse* in all other substances, including angels. And in this way they closely resemble the argumentation in Stage Two of the *De ente*, even though they establish the uniqueness of subsisting *esse* in different ways. Moreover, neither of them logically requires that one assume the actual existence of subsisting

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid. Note especially: "Esse autem subsistens oportet esse infinitum: quia non terminatur aliquo recipiente. Impossibile est igitur esse aliquod esse subsistens praeter primum." For discussion of the presence and the justification of this adage or axiom in Thomas's texts, see "Thomas Aquinas and the Axiom that Unreceived Act Is Unlimited," in my *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas II* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 123–51.

esse. They could simply move from the impossibility of there being more than one instance of this to the distinction of essence and *esse* in all other substantial entities.[51]

2.3. *De substantiis separatis, c. 8*

As a final text, one may turn to Thomas's very late treatise *On Separate Substances*, which may stem from Thomas's final days in Paris or from his subsequent time in Naples, that is, ca. 1272/1273.[52] Beginning in c. 5 of this treatise, Thomas presents in detail Avicebron's defense of and argumentation for universal hylomorphism and offers a series of arguments for the same. After detailed criticism of this position in c. 6, and an effort in c. 7 to show that there could not be one kind of matter for spiritual and corporeal substances, in c. 8 Thomas considers and refutes Avicebron's particular arguments in support of universal matter-form composition. In replying to the fourth argument, Thomas presents another version of God-to-creatures argumentation for the distinction and composition of essence and *esse* in separate substances.

According to this fourth argument, every created substance must be distinguished from the Creator. But the Creator is only one. Therefore, everything created must not be only one but must be composed of two factors, one of which must be form and the other matter. This is because one entity could not result from two matters or from two forms.[53]

Thomas counters that this argument has no force, for it does not follow that if spiritual substances lack matter, they are not distinct from God. If matter is denied of them along with its potentiality, another kind of potency remains in them insofar as they are not identical with *esse* but only participate in it. To support this, Thomas argues that there can only be one case of subsisting *esse per se*, just as any form, if it is considered as separate in itself, can only be one. Thus, things that differ numerically are one in species because a specific nature considered in itself is one. And just as such a specific nature is one in the order of thought when

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[51] For more on this, one may see my *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 150–55. There, I also consider similar arguments from Thomas's *De spiritualibus creaturis* 1 and from his Commentary on *Physics* 8.21 n. 1153 (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1954), 615b–616a, although, as I note there, in these later texts Thomas joins this argumentation with his mature views on participation. He does the same in his *De substantiis separatis*, as will now be seen.

[52] For this see Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:350, 1:435.

[53] Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* 5, Editio Leonina 40:D 49a.

it is considered in itself, so it would be one in the order of existence if it could exist in itself apart from the individuals which share in it. One may apply the same reasoning to a genus with respect to its species, Thomas continues, until one comes to *esse* itself. In other words, if a genus could exist in itself apart from any of its species and apart from the individuals in those species, it could only be one. But as regards *esse*, this is most common, and from this Thomas concludes that subsisting *esse* can only be one. The implication is that in this case, *esse* can and does exist apart from anything and everything else and, therefore, is unique. (A caveat should be mentioned here. Thomas would not want anyone to identify *esse commune* with *esse subsistens*).[54]

Thomas again draws a contrast between this unique instance of subsisting *esse* and all other things: "Therefore, it is impossible that apart from it there should be anything else that subsists which is *esse* alone."[55] Again he reasons from the uniqueness of the being that is identical with its act of existing to the composition in everything else of essence and *esse* as of potency and act.[56] And again, even though he here takes the existence of God as granted, his argument does not require this; for it rests on the impossibility of there being more than one being in which essence and *esse* are identical.[57]

3. *The Non-Simplicity of Angels Requires Neither Matter-Form Composition Nor Essence-Esse Composition: Godfrey of Fontaines*

During Thomas's second teaching period at the University of Paris (1268–1272), Giles of Rome, a young Augustinian Bachelor in Theology, was developing his own views on the relationship between essence and existence. His name would quickly become associated with a strong version of the real distinction of essence and existence in created beings. Adumbrations of his mature view are already to be found in his Commentary on Books I

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[54] Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* 8, Editio Leonina 40:D 55a.

[55] Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* 8, Editio Leonina 40:D 55a: "Impossibile est igitur quod praeter ipsum sit aliquid subsistens quod sit esse tantum."

[56] Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* 8, Editio Leonina 40:D 55a: "Omne autem quod est esse habet; est igitur in quocumque praeter primum et ipsum esse tamquam actus, et substantia rei habens esse tamquam potentia receptiva huius actus quod est esse."

[57] For some other examples of God-to-creatures argumentation to establish essence and *esse* composition in all other entities, see my *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 584–90. Unlike the arguments just considered here, these arguments do seem to presuppose prior knowledge of the existence of God.

and II of the *Sentences* (*Reportatio*, ca. 1270–1272; *Ordinatio* I, 1272–1273)[58] and in his slightly later *Theoremata de Corpore Christi* (ca. 1274), and his position is fully developed and strongly defended in his *Theoremata de esse et essentia* (1278–1285) and his *Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia* (1285–1287).[59] In presenting and defending his position, Giles at times refers to essence and existence as "things" (*res*) and distinguishes between them as between "thing" and "thing." This language has led many Thomistic scholars to protest that this is a gross misinterpretation of Aquinas's view according to which essence and *esse* are principles of being, not things or entities in their own right. If Giles had intended to present and defend Aquinas's position, this criticism would be justified, but it is not clear that this was his intent. He may have wanted to distinguish his own position from that of Aquinas, with which he was certainly familiar. Be that as it may, his choice of language was unfortunate, because it made his theory an easy target for criticism. In brief, if one posits an existence "thing" added to an essence "thing" in order to account for the actual existence of a finite being, the same reasoning should lead one to posit "sub-things" of which the superadded "existence"-thing itself is composed, and so on with respect to each of these superadded "sub-things" *ad infinitum*.[60]

And in his Quodlibet I of 1276, the secular Master Henry of Ghent, in considering whether the essence of a creature is its own existence (*esse*), presents a series of opening arguments in support of a real distinction between essence and existence which indicate that Henry was already familiar with Giles' position; and then Henry proceeds to criticize this position very sharply. In doing so, Henry seems to be influenced by certain arguments against this position already raised by a Master from the Arts Faculty, Siger of Brabant, and then goes on to present his own view,

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[58] For a recent edition of the *reportationes* of Giles' Commentary on the *Sentences*, see his *Reportatio Lecturae super Libros I–IV Sententiarum: Reportatio Monacensis; Excerpta Godefridi de Fontibus*, ed. Concetta Luna, *Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia* III.2 (Florence: Sismel—Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003). On the chronology of the *reportationes* of Books I–II and the *ordinatio* of Book I, see 16–24, 75–76, esp. 21 and note 34.

[59] For the dating of the *Theoremata de Corpore Christi* (between 1274 and 1276), see Concetta Luna in *Opera Omnia* III.2:141, and Giles of Rome, *Aegidii Romani, Apologia*, ed. and com. Robert Wielockx, *Opera Omnia* III.1 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki editore, 1985), 237–40, whom Luna cites and who, in his summarizing table, dates it ca. 1274 (p. 240). Also see Silvia Donati, "Studi per una cronologia delle opere di Egidio Romano I: Le opere prima del 1285—I commenti aristotelici," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 1 (1990): 1–111, esp. 20–25, on the dates of these works.

[60] See note 72 below.

according to which there is an intermediate kind of distinction, an intentional distinction, between essence and *esse existentiae*.[61] Upon Giles' return to Paris and readmission to the Theology Faculty in 1285, the dispute between Henry of Ghent and Giles continued, as is especially evident in Giles' *Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia* (1285–1287) and Henry's Quodlibet X, q. 7.[62]

Godfrey of Fontaines served as Master in the Theology Faculty at Paris from 1285 until ca. 1303/1304 and had previously studied Arts at Paris before pursuing higher studies in the Theology Faculty there.[63] The quodlibetal question was his preferred way of circulating his views, and already in his Quodlibet II, q. 2, of Easter 1286, while answering a question concerning whether the essence of a creature is something that is indifferent to existing and not existing, he connects this question with the dispute concerning the relationship between essence and existence. As he sees it, there are three choices: (1) essence is really identical with existence (*esse existentiae*) and differs from it only conceptually (*ratione*); or (2) essence and *esse* are intentionally distinct (*intentione*); or (3) *esse* expresses a distinct "thing" (*res alia*) from essence, and is the actuality of essence and really distinct from it.[64] And in his Quodlibet IV, q. 2, of 1287,

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[61] See Ruedi Imbach, "Averroistische Stellungnahmen zur Diskussion über das Verhältnis von *Esse* und *Essentia*: Von Siger von Brabant zu Thaddaeus von Parma," in *Studi sul XIV secolo in memoria di Anneliese Maier*, ed. Alfonso Maierù and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1981), 299–339, at 317–19.

[62] For detailed accounts of the controversy between Giles and Henry, see Jean Paulus, "Les disputes d'Henri de Gand et de Gilles de Rome sur la distinction de l'essence et de l'existence," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 13 (1940–1942): 323–58; and the recent well-documented study by Catherine König-Pralong, *Avènement de l'aristotélisme en terre chrétienne* (Paris: Vrin, 2005), esp. 63–76. See p. 63 on the point that Henry's adversary in this dispute was Giles of Rome rather than Thomas Aquinas.

[63] On Godfrey's life and writings, see my *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines: A Study in Late Thirteenth-Century Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1981), xi–xxxiv; and for updated information, see my "Godfrey of Fontaines at the University of Paris in the Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century," in *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277: Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Jan A. Aertsen, Kent Emery, Jr., and Andreas Speer (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 359–89.

[64] See Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* 2.2, ed. Maurice De Wulf and Auguste Pelzer, Les Philosophes Belges 2 (Leuven: Institut supérieur de Philosophie, 1904), 53, 60. Note especially: "Ad cuius intellectum est considerandum quod essentia sic se habet ad esse existentiae eius quod est aut idipsum realiter cum ipso differens ratione vel intentione, aut esse dicit *rem aliam* ab ipsa essentia" (italics mine). Note how Godfrey again formulates the third position: "Si autem esse dicat *rem aliam* quae sit actualitas essentiae realiter alia ab ipsa essentia . . ." Texts such as these make it very likely that his immediate source for this theory is Giles of Rome.

Godfrey again presents these three major positions on the essence-existence relationship in preparation for addressing the question of whether to hold that predicamental things are eternal in terms of their essential *esse* is to imply that the world is eternal. Some hold that existence (*esse*) is really distinct from essence and enters into real composition with it, even though neither is separable from the other. Others (clearly Henry of Ghent) maintain that essence and existence are really one and the same, but differ intentionally. Because of their intentional distinction, they are in some way composed with another. But Godfrey himself defends real identity between essence and existence and denies that they enter into composition with one another. They differ from one another only conceptually (*secundum rationem*) in accord with their distinct modes of understanding and signifying.[65]

In Quodlibet III, q. 1, of 1286, Godfrey was asked to determine whether a creature can be called a true and real being by reason of its essence when it is not a being by reason of its existence (*esse existentiae*).[66] In beginning his response, Godfrey comments that the answer to this question depends upon the relationship of *esse* to essence. If they differ in some way, one may be hesitant about whether a nonexistent creature could be called a true being by reason of its essence. But if they do not differ in any way, it must be held as certain that a nonexistent creature would not exist by reason of its essence. Godfrey then turns to the position that holds that existence (*esse existentiae*) is something (*aliquid*) that really differs from essence and also from *esse essentiae* and is the actuality of essence, just as form is the actuality of matter. Just as matter of itself is in potency to form and its privation, so too, according to this view, essence of itself is in potency to *esse* and its privation. Godfrey's use of the term "something" *aliquid* to describe existence (*esse*)—along with his reference to this same theory in the short version of Quodlibet III, q. 1, as holding that *esse* and essence are diverse "things" (*diversae res*) in creatures—strengthens the

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[65] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 4.2, Philosophes Belges 2:235. Note how Godfrey describes his own position: "Sed mihi videtur quod esse existentiae et essentia omnino sint idem secundum rem et differunt solum secundum rationem et modum intelligendi et significandi, nullam omnino compositionem facientia, sicut nec currere et cursum vel huiusmodi."

[66] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:156: "Primum erat utrum creatura possit dici ens verum et reale ratione suae essentiae, cum ipsa est non ens quantum ad esse existentiae."

impression that he is directly referring here and elsewhere to the position defended by Giles of Rome.[67]

In this same context, Godfrey presents some arguments which have been offered in support of real distinction between essence and existence. Since I have considered these in detail elsewhere, here I will pass over them quickly and limit myself to a few remarks.[68] The first argument, as presented in the long version of Godfrey's Quodlibet III, q. 1, is intended to show that just as matter is in potency to a form and to its privation, so essence is of itself in potency to *esse* and to its privation. In support, the point is made that essence can exist or not exist, and that neither existence nor nonexistence is included in the concept of an essence; moreover, indeed, the point is made that an essence can be understood with the contrary of existence, that is, as not existing. Therefore, existence must be distinct from essence and not included within its meaning. Hence, it must be "possible," that is, potential, with respect to existence. While this part of the argument reminds one of Stage One of Aquinas's argumentation in his *De ente et essentia*, Thomas himself does not make the point that an essence can be understood as not existing. Giles of Rome, however, in his *Quaestiones disputatae*, q. 11, does make this very point, and again, therefore, in all likelihood Giles's *Quaestiones disputatae* is the immediate source for Godfrey's understanding of this theory.[69]

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[67] Note that both long and short versions of Quodlibets III and IV have survived and been edited. See Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:158 (long version): "esse existentiae est aliquid differens realiter ab essentia sive etiam ab esse essentiae"; *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:302 (short version): "Quantum ad primum, dicunt quidam quod esse et essentia sunt diversae res in creatura . . ." Since Godfrey's Quodlibet III dates from Advent 1286, and since Giles of Rome had prepared qq. 1–11 of his *Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia* before that time, q. 9 and q. 11 of that treatise appear to be the most likely source for Godfrey's understanding of this position. On this also see Jean Paulus, *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique* (Paris: Vrin, 1938), 321, note 2; Edgar Hocedez, "Gilles de Rome et Henri de Gand sur la distinction réelle (1276–1287)," *Gregorianum* 8 (1927): 354–84, at 381, note 2 (Godfrey certainly had Giles in mind, and very probably had access to this text); and *Aegidii Romani Theoremata de esse et essentia*, ed. Edgar Hocedez (Leuven: Museum Lessianum, 1930), (12). Also see note 64 above.

[68] See my *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 46–66.

[69] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:158. Note especially: "Cum ergo omnis essentia creaturae possit intelligi non cointellecto esse eius vel sine esse, immo etiam cum contrario ipsius quia potest intelligi non esse, oportet quod esse sit aliud ab essentia et non sit de ratione eius . . ." Also see Godfrey's short version: "Primo quia illud quod non solum non est de intellectu essentiae sed etiam tale quod sub eius opposito potest essentia intelligi, non est idem re cum essentia. Sed esse non est de intellectu essentiae creatae et essentia potest intelligi sub opposito eius, quia potest vere intelligi non esse" (*Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:302). For Giles, see his *Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia* q. 11,

Godfrey's presentation within this context of arguments in support of a real distinction between essence and existence concludes in the long version with one based on the need to distinguish purely spiritual created beings from the absolute simplicity and infinity of God if one rejects the matter-form composition of such entities:

> If [there is] a being which is not composed of matter and form and brought into existence by being generated, but [is] a simple being in its essence and produced in existence by being created, it would not be of such a kind that something in it would necessarily be received from the one creating it, [but] it would be pure act and pure *esse*, and would be its own *esse*, and thus it would be infinite and unlimited and necessary *esse* of itself. But this is false.[70]

Before responding to this argument, to which we will return, Godfrey presents some arguments against the real distinction of essence and existence in created beings. As presented in the short version of this Quodlibet, he offers five arguments to prove that essence and *esse* do not signify different things (*diversas res*).

The first three arguments are closely related, and the first and third will be presented here. According to the first argument, being (*ens*) adds less than does oneness to that of which each is affirmed, since the notion (*ratio*) of being is included in every other notion (*ratio*). This is not true of the notion of oneness which does add something to the notion of being. But oneness does not add anything real to an essence of which it is affirmed. Therefore, neither does *ens* and consequently neither does *esse*, from which the name *ens* is taken.[71] Godfrey explicitly assigns his second argument to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* IV, and his third to Averroes's Commentary on that same passage in Aristotle. The third argument reasons that each and every thing is either a being of its essence or *per se*, or else by reason of something added to it. If it enjoys being by something added to it, one may then ask about that which is superadded. If it enjoys being by

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in Aegidius Romanus, *De esse et essentia, De mensura angelorum, et De cognitione angelorum* (Venice, 1503; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968), 24vb.

[70] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:159: "Si enim ens quod non est compositum ex materia et forma productum in esse per generationem, sed ens simplex in essentia in esse productum per creationem non esset tale quod in eo necessario aliquid esset receptum a creante illud, esset actus purus et esse purum, et esset suum esse, et sic esset infinitum et illimitatum et per se necesse esse. Sed hoc est falsum."

[71] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:303. Note: "Sed unum non addit aliquid reale super essentiam eius de quo dicitur. Ergo nec ens nec per consequens esse a quo ens dicitur."

reason of itself, one should have stopped with the first being and granted that it enjoys being by reason of itself. But if is it held that this superadded factor enjoys being only by reason of something else superadded, one will then raise the same question about this second superadded factor, and so on *ad infinitum.* By rejecting this absurdity, the argument concludes that each and every thing enjoys being by reason of itself and not by reason of some superadded thing (*res*). This argument brings out very nicely the danger involved in Giles of Rome's various references to essence and existence (*esse*) as "things," since such language invites counterarguments of this type.[72]

Godfrey's fourth argument casts considerable light on his understanding of the essence-*esse* relationship. A concrete noun, an abstract noun, and the corresponding verb do not signify really different things, although they do differ in their mode of signifying. Thus, if this is true of one who runs (*currens*), a race (*cursus*), and "to run" (*currere*), it is also true of being (*ens*), essence (*essentia*), and existence (*esse*), which are related as a concrete noun, an abstract noun, and a verb. Someone might counter that when *ens* is taken as a noun, it signifies the same thing as does essence, but not when it is taken as a participle. To this Godfrey replies that *legens*, whether taken as a noun or as a participle, signifies the same thing as does *legere*. Hence, the same thing applies to *ens* (taken as a noun or as a participle), essence, and existence (*esse*). *Ens*, whether taken as a noun or as a participle, and *esse* signify the same thing, and, hence, so do *ens, essentia, entitas*, and *esse*.[73]

Most pertinent to the present study, however, is Godfrey's response to the third argument he has presented in support of a real distinction between essence and existence. As he replies to this in the short version of Quodlibet III, q. 1, he directly addresses the issue of simplicity. In order to maintain that a created essence is less simple than God, one need not posit a plurality of distinct principles within such a being, whether of

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[72] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:303: "Relinquitur ergo quod unumquodque sit ens per se et non per aliquam rem additam . . ." For Aristotle, see *Met.* 4.2.1003b26–33. For Averroes's Commentary on the *Metaphysics*, see *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis* (Venice: Apud Iunctas, 1562–1574; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1962), 8:67va.

[73] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:303–4. Also see *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:164–65 for the long version of this argument, and *Quodl.* 13.3, Philosophes Belges 5:207, dating from 1297/1298, where Godfrey reiterates his rejection of real distinction between essence and *esse* and again draws upon this argument. For discussion see my *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey*, 57–58.

essence and existence or of substance and accidents. Indeed, while there is a substance-accident composition in every finite substance, this does not of itself imply that the essence of that substance is itself composed. Such an essence is more composed and less simple than the divine essence by reason of one and the same principle, which is act in one respect and potency in another. A less perfect essence is potential when it is compared with one that is more perfect, and yet it is actual to the extent that it actually exists.[74]

Godfrey develops this thinking in Quodlibet III, q. 3, and even more fully in Quodlibet VII, q. 7. In Quodlibet III, q. 3, he explicitly responds to a question asking whether an angelic nature is composed of true matter and of true form. He begins by presenting an opening argument that reasons that an angel must be composed of potency and act in order to differ from Pure Act and from the supreme simplicity of God. But wherever true potency and passivity are found, matter must be present. Since real potency and passivity are present in angels, they must include true matter as well as form. In the corpus of this question, he distinguishes between matter in the strict sense (pure potency which receives substantial form) and matter in a qualified sense (substance insofar as it is the subject of accidents). While he grants the presence of the latter in angelic beings, he completely rejects the presence of true matter (matter as pure potency) in angels, and hence any true matter-form composition therein. Let it suffice here for me to note briefly that he offers two different kinds of argumentation for this. First, he insists that when things share in matter, they can be changed into one another and are therefore subject to generation and corruption, something which is not true of angels. Indeed, as he insists at some length, if angels included matter, they would also be changeable into corporeal entities because of the presence of matter in both kinds of entity. Second, he argues from the presence of intelligence in angels as, of course, Aquinas had already done.

Since, however, Godfrey has rejected both the real distinction between essence and existence and Henry of Ghent's view that they are intentionally distinct, he cannot meet the opening argument in support of matter-form composition by appealing to an act-potency composition of them either as really distinct (see Thomas and Giles) or as intentionally distinct (see Henry). When it comes to defending some kind of potency-act com-

[74] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.1, Philosophes Belges 2:306. Note that Godfrey does not respond explicitly to this argument in the long version of Quodlibet 3.1.

position of angels, Godfrey argues that one cannot account for this either by positing a composition of essence and *esse* in them or one of form and matter. This is because it is not the composition of an angelic essence with something else which must be defended in the case of angels, for instance of essence and *esse*, but a composition that is intrinsic to the angelic essence itself. If the composition of an angelic essence with something else were the issue, one could merely appeal to its composition with the accidents that inhere in it rather than either to an essence-*esse* or matter-form composition.[75]

In both the long and short versions of his response, Godfrey goes on to argue that the fact that angels fall short (*recedunt*) from the divine actuality and simplicity must not be based on a collection of many (factors) that really differ. If this solution were to be adopted, it would follow that the more imperfect a being is, the more it would recede from the divine simplicity by being composed of more factors. From this it would follow that in the highest and first created substance, only two really distinct components would be present; and in the second created substance, three would be present; and in the third four; and so on *ad infinitum*. As Godfrey spells this out in the short version, it would follow that a simple element would recede less from the divine simplicity than does a human being, and hence would be more perfect than a human being. And, therefore, in the short version, with a reference to the solution he had proposed elsewhere (see Quodlibet III, q. 1), he concludes that this receding (*recessus*) which must apply to angelic beings does not involve a composition of diverse things (*res*) but, rather, includes potentiality together with a deficient degree of actuality in one and the same simple thing.[76]

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[75] See Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.3, Philosophes Belges 2:309 (short version): "Quia nec ponendo compositionem esse et essentiae, nec ponendo compositionem formae et materiae subterfugitur illud argumentum, quia hic non quaeritur [with MS C] de compositione essentiae cum alio, sed de compositione vel de simplicitate essentiae in se." This argument seems to strike directly only at an attempted appeal to essence-*esse* composition rather than to that of matter and form, since the latter, if granted, *would* establish the composition of an angelic essence. Godfrey's response to this argument in the long version applies this reasoning only to those who would appeal to the essence-*esse* composition and may therefore offer a better reading (*Quodl.* 3.3, Philosophes Belges 2:186). It should be noted that the long version of Quodlibets III and IV are *reportationes*, and the short versions also may be, in addition to being *abbreviationes*, although some have attributed the latter to Godfrey himself. See my *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey*, xxviii–xxix.

[76] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 3.3, Philosophes Belges 2:309. Note the concluding sentence: "Et ideo dicendum quod ille recessus, sicut alias dictum est, non est includere diversas res sed includere potentialitatem cum actualitate defectiva in eadem re simplici quantum ad realem compositionem." See my *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey*, 91–99.

While Godfrey's rejection of either matter-form composition or essence-*esse* composition of angels is clear enough, it is more difficult to determine how the solution he has adopted will in fact assure the composite character of angels and thereby preserve the uniqueness of divine simplicity. He returns to this in his Quodlibet VII, q. 7 (dating from 1290/1291 or 1291/1292), where he was asked to determine whether an angelic essence is composed of a genus and difference.[77] He begins his discussion by commenting that it is the same to ask whether there is a composition of genus and difference in angels, and to ask whether they fall into the genus substance univocally with corporeal substances. After considering some arguments against admitting this, Godfrey responds that it must be admitted that angels do fall into a genus in some way. Not to be included in a genus is something that must be reserved for God alone, because of his supreme degree of actuality, even though Godfrey comments that, unlike us, the "philosophers" assigned so much actuality and simplicity to their separate substances that they seem to have regarded them almost as if they were gods.[78]

In order to place angels in a genus in some way, Godfrey appeals to a distinction between a natural or real genus and a logical genus and proposes to include angels within the same logical genus as other substances, but not in the same natural genus. The notion (*ratio*) of a genus implies something potential and undetermined but determinable, and something which the notion of a species signifies as actual and determined by a form which a difference signifies. If different individuals are composed of really distinct principles of potentiality and actuality, that is, of matter and form, they will be included within the same natural genus.[79]

In the case of entities which lack matter-form composition, that is, angels or separate substances, Godfrey argues that one and the same thing may be viewed both under the aspect of potentiality and under the aspect of actuality. Each separate substance includes potentiality insofar as it is not identical with the First Being, which is pure act; each is a being by participation and does not possess of itself actual entity or existence. This kind of potentiality will suffice for such beings to fall into a logical

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[77] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:349.

[78] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:349. Note especially: "quia etiam non ponimus angelos esse substantias tantae actualitatis et simplicitatis sicut ponebant philosophi substantias separatas quas omnes quasi quosdam Deos ponere videbantur, ideo sunt a nobis angeli aliquo modo in genere collocandi" (353).

[79] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:354.

genus.[80] Godfrey considers and rejects any theory that would account for potentiality within angels by appealing to a composition of its essence or nature with its properties and accidents, both because the nature of a genus and species should be derived from that which is intrinsic to the nature or essence of an angel, and because, if certain separate substances were ever created without any accidents whatsoever, they would not then fall even into a logical genus. But this, he maintains, is something that should be reserved for God alone.[81]

In support of this solution, Godfrey appeals to the order or hierarchy among beings according to which the different species of being possess the nature and perfection of being in graded fashion. This means that one species of being adds a degree of perfection when compared to another species, with the consequence that the one lacking that degree is said to have a certain imperfection and potentiality. In this way, no matter how simple and perfect a created being may be, the nature (*ratio*) of the potential and the nature (*ratio*) of the actual can be found within it and, hence, a foundation for placing it within a logical genus, although not in a natural genus.[82]

Somewhat farther on in this discussion, Godfrey appeals to proposition 2 from Proclus's *Elementatio theologica*. There Proclus writes that "everything that participates in the One is both one and not-one." This is because everything that is not the One itself—the First One and the First and Pure Act—is something other than the One. And this, in turn, is because something cannot recede from the First One except by approaching (*per accessum*) the not-One. And this is because whatever participates in the One is not the One itself or the firstly One, but in secondary fashion and through a certain deficiency and receding (*recessus*) from the One. Hence, it is one and not one, that is, it is one in one way and many in another.[83] Godfrey also draws an analogy between beings and numbers.

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[80] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:355.

[81] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:356–57. Note that when he first mentions this theory, Godfrey refers to it as holding that a nature is composed with its *esse* as well as with its properties and accidents, but then omits further consideration of its *esse* in his subsequent discussion.

[82] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:357.

[83] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:359: "Et eundem modum intelligendi quantum ad substantias separatas videtur Proclus habuisse, prout patet secunda propositione, ubi dicitur quod omne quod participat uno est unum et non unum; quia, ut ibi probatur, omne quod non est ipsum unum, id est primo unum quod est Deus quod est actus primus et purus, est aliquid aliud existens quam unum, eo quod a primo uno non est recedere nisi per accessum in non unum seu in aliquid aliud quam unum; quia omne participans

Just as one cannot recede from the number one except by approaching multiplicity and by receding from unity to a greater or lesser degree, so too, beings do not recede from the firstly One except by approaching those things which have multiplicity to a greater or lesser degree. And those that are more fully one (*magis unialia*) are more divine and higher in the order of beings.[84]

In like manner, Godfrey argues, angels recede from the First One without any multiplication of components that would really unite to compose their essence and through which they would have potentiality and actuality. This is because they have an intermediary nature by being assimilated by their one nature to different things, that is, to that which is higher and more actual, and to that which is lower and more potential. As a consequence, insofar as they recede from the actuality of the First Being and approach potentiality, they do have composition in a certain way, not a real composition but a composition of reason. Yet, Godfrey adds, this composition is not purely imaginary (*fictae rationis*) but, rather, is one that belongs to a thing insofar as it is related to something higher and is therefore more potential, and insofar as it is related to something lower and is therefore more actual. Not even this kind of composition can be assigned to God, however, and therefore, while the mode of existing in itself (the mode of substance) does belong to him, the nature of a genus does not apply to him.[85]

While limitations of space will not permit me to develop this point here, there are strong indications that two Masters of Arts at Paris may have influenced Godfrey in his development of this kind of act-potency "composition" in angels. One likely source is Siger of Brabant, and another almost certain source is an anonymous set of questions preserved in a

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uno non est ipsum unum sive primo unum, sed secundario et per quendam defectum et recessum ab eo. Ergo est unum et non unum, id est non sic unum quin aliquo modo multa, quia est unum uno modo et non unum alio modo." For the medieval Latin translation of Proclus's text, see Clemens Vansteenkiste, "Procli Elementatio theologica translata a Guilelmo de Moerbeke," *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie* 13 (1951): 263–302, 491–531, at 265. For the Greek text, see *Proclus: The Elements of Theology*, ed. Eric Robertson Dodds, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), prop. 2, 2–3.

[84] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:359–60. Note: "et illa quae sunt magis unialia (with MS V for: universalia) sunt diviniora."

[85] Godfrey, *Quodl.* 7.7, Philosophes Belges 3:360. Note: "ita etiam in natura angeli, recedendo ab actualitate primi et accedendo ad potentialitatem simpliciter habet quodammodo compositionem, non rei, sed rationis ex potentia et actu; non quidem fictae rationis, sed rei convenientem secundum comparationem ad superius, sicut minus actualis et in hoc potentialioris et secundum comparationem ad inferius sicut magis actualis."

manuscript in Godfrey's personal library. As I have had occasion to indicate elsewhere, the similarities between Godfrey's text and certain passages in this anonymous text are undeniable. Godfrey, however, does not follow this unnamed Master in his denial, surprising for a Christian, that separated substances other than God are efficiently caused by God, or in his assertion that they depend upon him only in the order of final causality.[86]

Conclusion

In this chapter, three very different views concerning the metaphysical structure of angels and their distinction from divine simplicity have been considered. These positions could hardly be more diverse. For Bonaventure, in order to protect the uniqueness of divine simplicity it is imperative to hold that angels, like all other created beings, are composed of matter and form as diverse natures. For Thomas Aquinas, purely spiritual beings cannot be composed of matter and form but must be composed of two really distinct principles—essence and *esse*—which are related to one another as potency and act. For Godfrey, in agreement with Aquinas

[86] In his *Quaestiones* on the *Metaphysics*, Introduction, Siger rejects real distinction between essence and existence and then, in the longer versions of these questions (Munich and Cambridge MSS) as well as in the shorter version copied by Godfrey himself into his Student Notebook (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France [BnF] MS 16297), he faces an argument in support of real distinction based on the need for separate substances to be composed. See his *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1983), ed. Armand Maurer (Cambridge version), Introduction, q. 7, 31, arg. 7; 35, ad 7; and abbreviated version (Paris MS), 399; *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. William Dunphy (Louvain-la-Neuve: Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1981) (Munich Version), Intr., q. 7, p. 42, lines 48–52 and p. 47, line 105 – p. 48, line 30 (where he introduces a similar response with the remark that he does not *assert* this first way of refuting the argument, but then adds a second, as he also does in the Cambridge version, based on a distinction between the intelligible species of a separate substance and that substance itself). In each of these cases, he argues that as separate substances recede from the First Being, they are more potential and less actual. For more on this and for details concerning the anonymous text in Godfrey's library (Paris, BnF MS lat. 16096), see my "Possible Sources for Godfrey of Fontaines' Views on the Act-Potency Composition of Simple Creatures," *Mediaeval Studies* 46 (1984): 222–44, at 226–29 (Siger), 231–44 (Anonymous), including a number of texts in parallel columns to bring out the similarity between this anonymous source and Godfrey's text. See p. 241 on the composition presented in both texts as not *fictae rationis*, and p. 242, note 61, for the denial in the anonymous text that separate entities have a distinct efficient cause even though the First Principle is their final cause. On this manuscript, also see Robert Wielockx, "Le ms. Paris Nat. lat. 16096 et la condemnation du 7 mars 1277," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 48 (1981): 227–37, whose discussion first drew my attention to this particular set of questions.

and against Bonaventure on this point, there can be no genuine matter in pure spirits; but unlike Aquinas and unlike Bonaventure, Godfrey holds that there is no need to posit two really distinct principles of being or two distinct natures in angels in order to avoid making them as simple as God himself. His appeal to a consideration of one and the same being as potential, insofar as it is less perfect than higher beings and yet as actual insofar as it exists and is more perfect than lower beings, will suffice.

THE INDIVIDUATION OF ANGELS FROM BONAVENTURE TO DUNS SCOTUS

Giorgio Pini

The individuation of angels constitutes a good example of how an apparently obscure question concerning a specific aspect of Christian theology provided later medieval thinkers with the opportunity to explore some fundamental issues in metaphysics. As it happens, some of the best and most influential treatments of individuation were developed in the later Middle Ages in order to establish what accounts for an angel's individuality and whether there can be several angels in the same species. This is admittedly surprising, for the individuality of the objects of our everyday experience seems to be a more pressing metaphysical problem than the individuality of beings that, as medieval thinkers readily admitted, lie beyond the limits of what we can currently experience. There may be two explanations for the prominence of treatments of angelic individuation. First, a medieval theologian would have encountered his first clear opportunity to discuss the problem of individuation when commenting on the treatise on angels in Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (Book II, distinction 3), which had become the standard theology textbook since the first half of the thirteenth century.[1] Second, angels provided medieval thinkers with a difficult test case for their theories of individuation.

The debate over the individuation of angels entered its most dramatic phase with Thomas Aquinas. It is not an exaggeration to say that later medieval discussions on this topic were largely debates over Aquinas's position. In the course of those discussions, some fundamental notions of

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[1] Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* 2.3.1 (Grottaferrata, Rome: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1971–1981), 1:341–42.

Western metaphysics (including the notions of form, essence, and potentiality/possibility) were closely scrutinized. Since a key question in that debate was whether God could create several angels in the same species, the issue of God's freedom and omnipotence with respect to His creatures was also being considered from a new perspective in the background.

In this paper, I focus on the main positions on the individuation of angels developed between ca. 1250 and 1300. In those years, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Richard of Middleton, Henry of Ghent, Giles of Rome, and John Duns Scotus put forward the main theories that would be discussed in the later Middle Ages and afterwards.

1. *The Common Framework and Bonaventure's Position*

Medieval discussions on the individuation of angels focused on the issue of synchronic individuation, i.e., what accounts for a certain thing's being an individual distinct from other individuals, as opposed to diachronic individuation, i.e., what accounts for a certain thing's remaining the same individual over time. Since at least the middle of the thirteenth century, there was some consensus about the terms of the debate.[2] The authors we will consider agreed on three important points.

First, they agreed that created things belong to natural kinds (i.e., species) and that, more controversially, several things belong to the same natural kind because they share a common essence.[3]

Second, they agreed on the general definition of what it is to be an individual: to be an individual is to be "undivided in itself."[4] In order to understand this formula, we should distinguish between two kinds of division and, correspondingly, two kinds of parts. First, something may be divided into "integral parts," i.e., parts that do not exemplify the whole of which they are parts. For example, Socrates can be divided into his soul and his body, and in turn his body can be divided into a head, two

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[2] On the problem of individuation in the Middle Ages in general, see Peter King, "The Problem of Individuation in the Middle Ages," *Theoria* 66 (2000): 159–84. See also the articles collected in the volume *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation 1150–1650*, ed. Jorge J. E. Gracia (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

[3] An exception we shall consider is Richard of Middleton. On this point in general, see Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2004), 53–54.

[4] See, for example, John Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.2 n. 42, Editio Vaticana 18:241; *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.1 n. 48, Editio Vaticana 7:413. See also the texts cited below at note 6.

arms, two legs, etc. Each of these parts is a constituent of the whole (i.e., Socrates and his body, respectively) but does not exemplify it. Second, something may be divided into "subjective parts," i.e., parts that exemplify the whole of which they are parts. For example, the essence *human being* is divided into Socrates, Xanthippe, Plato, etc., each of whom exemplifies the essence *human being*. There is an easy linguistic test to figure out whether a part is integral or subjective. If the whole cannot be predicated of its parts, those parts are integral. For example, "Socrates" is not predicated of his soul or his body. By contrast, if the whole can be predicated of its parts, those parts are subjective. For example, "human being" is predicated of "Socrates," "Xanthippe," etc. Incidentally, this is the reason why these parts are called "subjective": they are the subjects of which the whole is predicated.[5] When an individual is described as what is undivided in itself, the sort of indivisibility that is being referred to is indivisibility into *subjective* parts. The point is that something is an individual if and only if it is uninstantiable.

A second clause was usually added to the uninstantiability clause. We may call this second clause the "distinctness clause": an individual is not just undivided in itself but is also divided, i.e., distinct, from anything else. For example, Socrates is distinct from both Xanthippe and Plato as well as from all other things. Unfortunately, medieval authors did not discuss the relationship between these two defining aspects of individuals. Presumably, these two aspects should be considered as two ways or descriptions to capture one and the same simple metaphysical feature, i.e., individuality.[6]

Accordingly, the solution to the problem of individuation should provide the answer to these two connected questions: First, what accounts for a certain essence's being divisible and actually divided into instantiations, i.e., into individual things of the same kind? Second, what accounts

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[5] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.1 n. 48, Editio Vaticana 7:413. See Peter King, "Bonaventure (b. ca. 1216; d. 1274)," in *Individuation in Scholasticism*, 141–72, at 142 and 162–63.

[6] See Aquinas's standard description of what it is to be an individual in *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 4.2 ad 3, Editio Leonina (Rome, 1882ff.) 50:125b: "... de ratione indiuidui est quod sit in se indiuisum et ab aliis ultima diuisione diuisum." See also Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.40 n. 1164, ed. C. Pera, P. Marc, and P. Caramello (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1961), 2:157a; Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.29.4; Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 3.5.2.2 ad 1, *Opera Omnia* 3:133b; Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 3.10.1.3 co., *Opera Omnia* 3:231a; and Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.4 n. 76, Editio Vaticana 7:426–27. On the relationship between the two ways of describing what an individual is, see King, "Bonaventure," 163, note 2. Notice that Scotus explicitly held that what makes something an individual is also what makes an individual *this* individual. Nothing of what follows, however, depends on this specific point.

for a certain individual's being undivided and indivisible into instantiations, i.e., into further individuals of the same kind?

The first question addresses the numerical plurality or multiplication of things sharing the same essence within the same species. The second question addresses individuation proper. Even though these are two separate questions, it was a common assumption in the later Middle Ages that they should be answered in the same way, i.e., that one and the same feature acts as both the principle of numerical multiplication within the same species and the principle of individuation. In this respect, the principle of individuation can be fruitfully compared to a specific differentia, which is both constitutive of a species and divisive of a genus. For example, the specific differentia *rational* is both constitutive of the species *human being* (defined as *rational animal*) and divisive of the genus *animal*. Similarly, what constitutes a certain thing as an individual—i.e., what accounts for an individual's being uninstantiable—is also what accounts for an essence's being instantiated.

Finally, there was a third point of agreement among later medieval thinkers. They all agreed that angels are individuals, for they are capable of thoughts, volitions, and actions, and it was assumed that only individuals can think, will, and act.[7] So, the question was: What accounts for an angel's individuality?

Before Aquinas, the individuation of angels was not singled out as posing a specific difficulty, since angels were not considered to have a deep metaphysical structure different from that of the substances of our everyday experience. Bonaventure may be regarded as an example of this attitude.[8] According to him, every created thing is composed of two constituents, matter and form. For Bonaventure, matter is roughly equivalent to potentiality, while form is roughly equivalent to actuality. At a very general level, that every creature is composed of matter and form is due to the fact that every creature, both with respect to what it is (e.g., a cat or a human being) and with respect to what it does (e.g., purring

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[7] An exception is the position quoted and rejected by Richard of Middleton, *In Sent*. 2.3.3.1 (Brixiae, 1519; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963), 51–52 (in the edition wrongly numbered as 56), *Utrum angelus universalis sit in reali existentia*. It is not clear, however, who the author is that Richard of Middleton is attacking. The same position is presented and attacked by Peter of John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum* 13, ed. Bernhard Jansen, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 4–6 (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1922–1926), 1:234–41.

[8] On Bonaventure's position on individuation, see King, "Bonaventure," in *Individuation in Scholasticism*, 141–72.

or thinking), is the result of the actualization of some potentialities that could have remained non-actualized. Things could have been otherwise. For example, it is a contingent fact that this very cat was generated. Also, it is a contingent fact that this cat is actually purring or that this human being is actually thinking; by actually purring and actually thinking, the cat and the human being actualize some powers present in their natures that did not have to be actualized. Bonaventure made this point by saying that every creature is limited and changeable, and that these two features can be explained only by positing in any creature two metaphysical constituents that account for its having some potentialities that are not necessarily actualized. These two constituents are matter and form. In this way, Bonaventure contrasted creatures to God, who is the only being that lacks composition.[9]

Since all creatures have potentialities that are not necessarily actualized (i.e., no creature is a necessary being, since all are limited and subject to change), Bonaventure concluded that all creatures are composed of matter and form.[10] This does not entail, however, that any thing composed of matter and form is also composed of quantitative parts (i.e., parts with a certain extension), for Bonaventure carefully distinguished between matter, on the one hand, and extension on the other. Quantity, not matter, makes something extended, i.e., corporeal. Accordingly, some things may be composed of matter and not be extended. This is the case with angels. Thus, angels are both material and spiritual, i.e., not corporeal.[11]

Bonaventure's position concerning the composition of matter and form in any created thing, angels included, allowed him to give a unitary solution to the problem of individuation for all created things. Even though angels are different in kind from corporeal creatures, they are individuated in the same way, i.e., as a result of their being composed of matter and form. Neither matter nor form, taken by themselves, accounts for the individuality of a certain thing. It is because of their union that a certain individual exists.[12]

Accordingly, Bonaventure could easily account for the numerical multiplication of angels within the same species. Since it is not an angel's form

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[9] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1 arg. 3 and ad 3, *Opera omnia* 2:89 and 91. For a discussion of this point, see John F. Wippel, "Metaphysical Composition of Angels in Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Godfrey of Fontaines," in this volume.

[10] *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1 co., *Opera omnia* 2:89 and 91.

[11] *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1 co., *Opera omnia* 2:91. See also *In Sent.* 2.3.1.2, *Opera omnia* 2:96–98.

[12] *In Sent.* 2.3.1.2.3 co., *Opera omnia* 2:109–10.

that accounts for that angel's individuation, there is nothing in a certain form that prevents it from giving rise to different individuals by being united with matter several times. But individuals that have the same form are in the same species. Therefore, there can be several angels in the same species. It also follows that in angels, just like in any other creature, there is a difference between, on the one hand, the kind of thing an individual is and, on the other hand, that very individual. As Bonaventure put it, in any individual there is a difference between the essence and the supposit that instantiates it. Since the same essence can be instantiated many times, there can be many supposits sharing the same essence.[13]

2. *Thomas Aquinas: Angels as Individual Essences*

Since the beginning of his career, Thomas Aquinas developed a remarkably original view on the individuation of angels. All the details of his position are already in place in his early Commentary on the *Sentences* (1252–1256) and in the similarly youthful *De ente et essentia* (written in the same period). In later writings, he merely elaborated on the same basic points.[14]

Aquinas's view is grounded on two premises. First, Aquinas held that angels are pure forms not received in matter. Second, he held that a form can be numerically multiplied (i.e., multiply instantiated) only if it is received in matter. From these two premises, Aquinas concluded that

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[13] *In Sent*. 1.8.2.2 co., *Opera omnia* 1:168b: "... omne individuum habet esse limitatum; et ideo in aliquo convenit, in aliquo differt cum alio, et ideo in omni individuo differt essentia et suppositum; multiplicatur enim essentia in suppositis."

[14] Thomas Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1–2 and 2.3.1.4, ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 2:85–91 and 96–98; *De ente et essentia* 4 and 5, Editio Leonina 43:375–79; *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.93 nn. 1795–1800, ed. Marietti, 2:264a–265a; *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.4; *De spiritualibus creaturis* 8, Editio Leonina 24/2:76–87. See also *In Sent*. 2.32.2.3, ed. Mandonnet, 2:839; *In Sent*. 4.12.1.1.3 ad 3, ed. Marie Fabien Moos (Paris: Lethielleux, 1947), 4:503; *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* 3 ad 6, Editio Leonina 24/1:28–29; and *Super librum De Causis expositio* 9, ed. H. D. Saffrey, 2nd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 65–66. See Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 59–60; and Tiziana Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie: subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparés à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 35–43. For Aquinas's doctrine of individuation in material substances, see *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 4.2, Editio Leonina 50:122–26; and John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 351–75.

there cannot be several angels in the same species and that, accordingly, there are as many individual angels as there are species.[15]

Let us consider each of Aquinas's premises in turn. As to the first premise, Aquinas rejected the view that angels are composed of form and matter. Rather, he argued, angels are pure forms or, as he also called them, "separate substances." While material things are composed of matter and a form acting as the structure or organizing principle of that matter, separate substances are just forms with no corresponding matter. Unlike the form of a material thing, a pure form lacks any capacity to be received in matter as its organizing principle.[16]

Aquinas's main argument for the immateriality of angels is based on their intellectual nature, i.e., on their capacity to think. According to Aquinas, angels are pure minds, and minds are immaterial. This argument takes us to some of the most controversial aspects of Aquinas's theory of cognition and metaphysics. Aquinas held that cognition in general and intellectual cognition in particular must be accounted for as the reception of a form. The form of any composite, say of cats, can exist in two ways. First, it can exist as the structure organizing some matter. For example, the form *felinity* is the structure organizing the matter out of which cats are constituted. Second, that same form can exist as a representation. For example, my concept of *felinity* is a representation of cats or of what cats are. Let us focus on mental representations, i.e., the concepts by which our intellect cognizes the world. Aquinas held that a form can be a mental representation only if it is considered independently of its individual instantiations, i.e., not as an individualized form (*inquantum est haec*) but just as a form (*inquantum est forma*). For example, the form *felinity*,

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[15] Peter of John Olivi grasped the structure of Aquinas's argument clearly. See Peter of John Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 33, ed. Jansen, 1:596–97: "... licet quidam ... dicant quod quilibet angelus comprehendit totam suam speciem secundum totum suum ambitum, ita quod nihil illius speciei potest esse vel intelligi extra ipsum sicut nec extra ipsam speciem, *fundantes se praecipue in duobus, scilicet in omnimoda privatione materiae et in causa multiplicationis numeralis individuorum sub eadem specie vel speciei in plura individua, quam volunt esse materiam et accidentia materialia*, quia secundum eos nullatenus sunt in angelis, sic per consequens nullo modo poterit in eis numeraliter multiplicari species in plura individua" (italics mine). On Olivi's position and his criticism of Aquinas, see Tiziana Suarez-Nani, "Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 70 (2003): 233–316.

[16] Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1, ed. Mandonnet, 2:85–89; *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.49–51 nn. 1247–72, ed. Marietti, 2:169b–172b; *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.2; *De substantiis separatis* 5–8, Editio Leonina 40:D 48–D 56; *Quodl.* 9.4.1, Editio Leonina 25/1:100b–103b.

when united with a certain portion of matter in an individual cat, is an individualized form, i.e., the form of a certain individual cat. As such, it is not the representation of anything; rather, it is the metaphysical constituent of a certain individual. By contrast, when the form *felinity* is considered not as it is individualized in this or that portion of matter, but just as the form *felinity*, it is not individualized but is rather a representation of all individual cats. Since a form can function as a representation only if it is not individualized, and since a form is individualized any time it is received in a portion of matter, it follows that a form, in order to function as a representation, must be received in an immaterial subject. From all this, Aquinas concluded that something is capable of thinking—i.e., of receiving forms as representations—only if it is immaterial. In other words, minds are immaterial. Since angels are pure minds, they are immaterial.[17]

Virtually every step in this argument is controversial. Specifically, the link Aquinas established between immateriality, universality, and intelligibility (i.e., a form's capacity to act as a mental representation of something else) is highly problematic.[18] As it happens, even though Aquinas consistently linked his position on the individuation of angels to his claim that angels are immaterial, he also acknowledged that, strictly speaking, his position on the individuation of angels does not entail the claim that angels are immaterial. All we have to concede, according to Aquinas, is that angels lack *extended* matter, i.e., matter that is divisible into quantitative parts, i.e., parts with a certain length, depth, and height. Since Aquinas, unlike Bonaventure, held that all matter is extended, he thought that the claim that angels lack extended matter is equivalent to the claim that angels are immaterial.[19] All the same, he argued that, even if one denies

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[17] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1, ed. Mandonnet, 2:85–89. See also *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.2 co. Cf. *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.49 n. 1250, ed. Marietti, 2:170a.

[18] At some point, Aquinas himself seemed to have abandoned the crucial link between universality and intelligibility, i.e., between a form's being multiply instantiable and its acting as a representation of something else. See *Summa theologiae* 1a.86.1 ad 3; *De spiritualibus creaturis* 9 ad 15, Editio Leonina 24/2:100. But he always kept the link between immateriality and intelligibility.

[19] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.1, ed. Mandonnet, 2:86–87. On the relationship between matter and dimensions, see Silvia Donati, "La dottrina delle dimensioni indeterminate in Egidio Romano," *Medioevo* 14 (1988): 149–233; Donati, "The Notion of *dimensiones indeterminatae* in the Commentary Tradition of the Physics in the Thirteenth and in the Early Fourteenth Century," in *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Cornelis Hendrik Leijenhorst, Christoph Herbert Lüthy, and J. M. M. H. Thijssen (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 189–223; and Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 351–75.

that such an equivalence holds, it must still be conceded that angels lack *extended* matter. This is actually what Bonaventure claimed. And as we shall see, this is all that Aquinas needed to derive his conclusion concerning the individuation of angels.[20]

As to the second premise, Aquinas held that a form can be numerically multiplied (i.e., multiply instantiated) only if it is received in matter. Aquinas never gave a detailed defense of this claim, but the reason why he was committed to it can be easily reconstructed. His idea was that any form, when taken by itself, is not divided into instantiations. For example, if the form *whiteness* existed by itself and were not received in any subject, it would be just one undivided form and there would be just one instantiation of that form.[21] But then how is a form actually divided into instantiations? Aquinas held that this occurs only if that form is received into different parcels or chunks of matter.[22] Matter is already divided into quantified parts, i.e., parts with a certain length, depth, and height. In other words, matter is extended and can therefore be divided into portions. By contrast, a form is divided into numerically distinct instantiations only if it is received into different portions of matter. It is the parcel or chunk of matter in which a form is received that individuates that form. For example, the form *whiteness* is divided into distinct instances of whiteness when it is received into distinct bodies, each of which is characterized by its own extension.

Aquinas's basic assumption is that a form's divisibility into multiple instantiations is dependent on matter's divisibility into quantitative parts. It is extension that accounts for a form's being multiply instantiated. What is in itself non-extended can be numerically multiplied only if it is received in something extended, i.e., into different parcels of matter. It follows that a form can be numerically multiplied only if it has a capacity to be received in matter. According to Aquinas, this is the case even with human minds. There are numerically many human minds (and not just

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[20] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.4, ed. Mandonnet, 2:97. Cf. *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.4.

[21] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.4; *De spiritualibus creaturis* 8, Editio Leonina 24/2:80b; *Expositio in Peryermenias* 1.10, Editio Leonina 1*/1:50, lines 95–103; *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.93 n. 1797, ed. Marietti, 2:264b. See Gabriele Galluzzo, "*Met*. Z 13 in the Contemporary Debate and in Aquinas's Interpretation," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 14 (2003): 159–224, at 217–18.

[22] Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 4.2, Editio Leonina 50:125, lines 194–213; *In Sent.* 2.3.1.4, ed. Mandonnet, 2:97; *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* 3 ad 13, Editio Leonina 24/1:29, lines 421–24; *Summa theologiae* 3a.77.2 co.

one mind for all human beings) because human minds can be and are actually received into different bodies.[23]

Not all forms have the capacity to be received in matter, however. Specifically, angels are pure forms that lack any capacity to act as the organizing principle of matter, according to Aquinas's first premise. It follows that angelic forms are not numerically multipliable. So, there are no two angels sharing the same form. And since form is what determines what kind of thing something is, i.e., its essence, it follows that no two angels have the same essence and that, therefore, no two angels can be in the same species:

> For if [angels] are held to be immaterial, since a form or nature is numerically multiplied only in the diversity of matter, it follows that a form that is simple, immaterial and not received in any matter is only [numerically] one. Hence any thing distinct from that form is of a nature distinct [from that form's nature], in such a way that it is different because of its own form, not because of the material principle (for there is no material principle there). Such a diversity [in form] causes a difference in species. Hence it follows that any two angels differ according to their species.[24]

Aquinas's conclusion that no two angels can belong to the same species is admittedly surprising, but, as we have seen, it is just the consequence of two much less controversial premises. Bonaventure could avoid this conclusion because he rejected Aquinas's first premise, i.e., that angels are pure forms. As we shall see, after Aquinas's death, most of his critics agreed on the immateriality of angels but rejected the second premise, according to which a form is divided into different instantiations only if it is received into matter (which for Aquinas, but not for Bonavenure, is always *extended* matter).

Surprising as Aquinas's conclusion may sound, it is not immediately clear why so many of his critics were incensed by the claim that no two angels can belong to the same species. The apparent simplicity of Aquinas's reasoning, however, should not prevent us from appreciating the radical novelty of his position. As a consequence of the two premises to

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[23] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 5, Editio Leonina 43:378–379, lines 56–71; *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 4.2, Editio Leonina 50:125, lines 195–202.

[24] Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.4, ed. Mandonnet, 2:97: "Si enim [angeli] immateriales ponuntur, cum nulla forma vel natura multiplicet numerum nisi in diversitate materiae, oportet quod forma simplex et immaterialis, non recepta in aliqua materia, sit una tantum: unde quidquid est extra eam est alterius naturae, eo quod distet ab eo secundum formam, non secundum materiale principium, quod ibi nullum est. Talis autem diversitas causat differentiam in specie. Unde oportet quoslibet duos angelos acceptos differre secundum speciem."

which he was committed, Aquinas came to reject a hitherto unchallenged view, one that many thinkers after Aquinas would still consider as fundamental, i.e., the view that any created essence is at least in principle divisible into instantiations and that, consequently, no created thing is *essentially* individual.[25] For, as we have seen, Aquinas was committed to the following claims: first, angels are pure forms; second, only forms capable of being received in matter can be numerically multiplied (i.e., multiply instantiated); and third, angels are individual. Therefore, some created essences are individual not because their form is received in different parcels of matter but because their form is such that it is not capable of being received in matter.[26] Some created things are set apart from all other creatures insofar as they are individual (i.e., indivisible into instantiations) by virtue of their very form and essence, not because of something that happens to them but just because of what they are. Those things are angels.

Thus, the novelty of Aquinas's position on the individuation of angels consists in his admission that some created essences are individual of themselves, i.e., not divisible into instantiations. As far as immaterial essences are concerned, the usual distinction between essence (which is ordinarily what is divisible into instantiations) and individual (which is what is indivisible into instantiations) collapses:

> . . . the essences of composite things, by being received in designated matter, are multiplied according as matter is divided. From this it results that there are things the same in species and different in number. But since the essence of a simple entity is not received in matter, it cannot be multiplied in this way. That is why in these substances we cannot find many individuals in the same species; there are as many species among them as there are individuals . . .[27]

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[25] Aquinas himself seemed to have claimed that no created form is in itself individual in the passage from *Super Boetium De Trinitate* 4.2 referred to above at note 22. But from the context of that passage, it is clear that Aquinas's claim should be restricted to forms of material things, i.e., forms that have a capacity to be received in matter.

[26] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 3a.77.2 co.: "Est enim de ratione individui quod non possit in pluribus esse. Quod quidem contingit dupliciter. Uno modo, quia non est natum in aliquo esse; et hoc modo formae immateriales separatae, per se subsistentes, sunt etiam per seipsas individuae. Alio modo, ex eo quod forma substantialis vel accidentalis est quidem nata in aliquo esse, non tamen in pluribus: sicut haec albedo, quae est in hoc corpore." See also Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 8 ad 4, Editio Leonina 24/2:83; ibid., ad 13, Editio Leonina 24/2:85; and *De unitate intellectus* 5, Editio Leonina 43:311, lines 63–67 and 71–74. On this point, see Galluzzo, "*Met.* Z 13 in the Contemporary Debate and in Aquinas's Interpretation," 217–18.

[27] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 4, Editio Leonina 43:376, lines 80–88: ". . . essentie rerum compositarum ex eo quod recipiuntur in materia designata multiplicantur secundum

It should be stressed that Aquinas never held the view that since angels are immaterial and a form is numerically multiplied only if it is received in matter, angels are self-subsisting universals, i.e., something like the Platonic forms. Admittedly, Aquinas's talk of angels as "subsisting species" (*species subsistentes*) might have caused some confusion.[28] But he did not intend to suggest by this that angels are common entities. Rather, angels, not being individualized by matter, are individual by themselves, i.e., they are individual essences.[29] Most of the time, however, Aquinas avoided such a potentially misleading way of expressing himself.

Consequently, Aquinas had two distinct explanations for the numerical multiplication of essences and of individuation, according to whether material things or angels are involved. For material things, matter acts both as the principle of numerical multiplication of an essence (i.e., what accounts for an essence's being multiply instantiated) and as the principle of individuation (i.e., what accounts for an individual's being indivisible into instantiations). By contrast, nothing in angels acts as the principle of the essence's *numerical multiplication*. Still, angels are individuals and not common essences, because they have a distinct principle of *individuation*, i.e., their own essence, which is in itself individual and not individuated by any external feature.

Before considering what several thinkers found so troubling in this view, let us consider three of its most remarkable aspects.

First, it is an immediate consequence of Aquinas's view that even God cannot create several numerically distinct angels in the same species, for not even God can numerically multiply what lacks the capacity to be numerically multiplied. This results not from a limitation of God's power but from the fact that to create several angels in the same species is a logical impossibility.[30]

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diuisionem eius, unde contingit quod aliqua sunt idem specie et diuersa numero. Sed cum essentia simplicis non sit recepta in materia, non potest ibi esse talis multiplicatio; et ideo oportet ut non inueniatur in illis substantiis plura indiuidua eiusdem speciei, sed quot sunt ibi indiuidua tot sunt ibi species." The English translation is taken from St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, trans. Armand Maurer, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968), 54.

[28] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.93 n. 1796, ed. Marietti, 2:264b.

[29] For Aquinas's explicit endorsement that angels are individual, see, for example, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.2, ed. Mandonnet, 2:90; and *De unitate intellectus* 5, Editio Leonina 43:310, lines 55–58 and 311, lines 71–72.

[30] At least once, however, Aquinas argued that God could numerically multiply the human intellect even if the human intellect had no natural tendency to be numerically multiplied. But he restricted this argument to the *human* intellect. See *De unitate intel-*

Second, since angels are individual essences, the distinction between what it is to be an individual and what it is to be an essence is merely a distinction between two different ways of describing one and the same entity. So, when we describe an angel as an individual or as an essence, we do not pick out two different features in an angel. As Aquinas sometimes said, in angels the distinction between supposit (i.e., an individual angel) and essence (i.e., the kind of angel that individual angel is) is only a distinction of reason. Thus, if a certain angelic essence exists at all, it necessarily exists as instantiated in a certain individual. (This does not entail, of course, that angels exist necessarily.) By contrast, in any material thing, the distinction between the individual and its essence is not merely a distinction between different ways of describing that thing; rather, it picks out two features of reality that are different independently of the way we describe them. As Aquinas said, in material things there is a real distinction between supposit and essence.[31]

Third, Aquinas held that, since a material essence has a capacity to be instantiated many times, it follows that no single instantiation completely

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lectus 5, Editio Leonina 43:311, lines 96–117; and Roland Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277* (Leuven: Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1977), 83–84.

[31] Aquinas argued that supposit and essence are really identical in separate substances but really distinct in material substances in the following passages: *In Sent*. 1.25.1.1 ad 3, ed. Mandonnet, 2:603–4; *In Sent*. 2.3.1.2, ed. Mandonnet, 2:87; *In Sent*. 3.5.1.3, ed. Marie Fabien Moos (Paris: Lethielleux, 1933), 3:196–97; *Summa contra Gentiles* 4.55 n. 3937, ed. Marietti, 3:352a; *De potentia* 7.4, ed. P. M. Pession in *Quaestiones disputatae* (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1965), 2:195b; *De Potentia* 9.1, p. 226a; *Summa theologiae* 1a.3.3 co.; *Summa theologiae* 1a.39.3 ad 3; *De spiritualibus creaturis* 5 ad 9, Editio Leonina 24/2:64; *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* 17 ad 10, Editio Leonina 24/1:152; *Sentencia libri De anima* 3.2, Editio Leonina 45/1:209 and 211; *In Met*. 7.5 nn. 1378–80, ed. M.-R. Cathala and R. M. Spiazzi (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1964), 339b; *In Met*. 7.11 nn. 1535–36, p. 370b; *In Met*. 8.3 n. 1709, p. 410b; *In Epistolam S. Pauli ad Philippenses* 2.2 n. 54, ed. R. Cai (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1953), 2:101a. As is well known to scholars, however, Aquinas was not always consistent on this point. Other times he claimed that supposit and essence are different in any creature whatsoever and that only in God is there a real identity between supposit and essence. See *In Sent*. 1.5.1, ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 1:151; *In Sent*. 1.34.1.1, ed. Mandonnet, 1:788; *De unione Verbi incarnati* 1, ed. M. Calcaterra and T. S. Centi, in *Quaestiones Disputatae* 2 (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1965), 422b; *Quodl.* 2.2.2, Editio Leonina 25:215–18; and *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.54 nn. 1292–94, ed. Marietti, 2:175a; cf. also *Summa theologiae* 3a.17.1. For some attempts to deal with Aquinas's at least apparent inconsistency, see Edward Rousseau, "Essence and Supposit in Angels according to St. Thomas," *The Modern Schoolman* 33 (1956): 241–56; John F. Wippel, "Presidential Address: Substance in Aquinas's Metaphysics," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 71 (1987): 2–22, at 11–15; and Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 238–51. On this issue in general, see also Gabriele Galluzzo, "Aquinas on Common Nature and Universals," *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 71 (2004): 131–71.

actualizes that capacity. No matter how many individual cats there are in the world, there is nothing in the essence *felinity* that prevents it from being instantiated one more time. There may be a limit on instantiation, however, when there is not enough matter to produce more instantiations of a certain form. (This is actually what occurs in the case of heavenly bodies such as the sun and the moon: their single instantiation uses up all the suitable matter, so to speak, so that there can be just one sun and one moon).[32] By contrast, there can only be one angel of a certain specific kind because each angel is an individual essence. If a certain angelic essence is instantiated at all, it is instantiated just once. Moreover, it is necessarily instantiated not just as an individual angel but also as the particular individual angel it is. As a consequence, each angelic essence is completely actualized in its single instantiation.[33] According to Aquinas, an angel is in potency only with respect to its existence, for an angel's existence is contingent. Thus, since an angel's act of existence is not part of his essence, each angel is composed of essence and existence.[34] By contrast, what accounts for an angel's individuality is just his own essence, and that essence has no potentiality for repeated instantiation. Aquinas made this point by using an obscure phrase he found in the *De causis*. Since an angel's form is not received in matter, it is "infinite," i.e., not limited "from below." This means that there is nothing in which an angel's form is received that can prevent that form from being fully actualized. As a consequence, that form is completely actualized in a single instantiation.[35]

Aquinas's claims about the individuation of angels are part of his larger view of the structure of the universe as a whole. Creatures are organized in a hierarchical structure where numerical multiplicity is gradually replaced by specific multiplicity. At the bottom, there are material things; these can be numerically multiplied in the same species, because their form is such that it is received in matter, and their essence is such that it is never fully actualized in any of its instantiations. Just above them are heavenly bodies such as the sun and the moon, whose form is received in matter and whose essence is not multiply instantiated, because all the suitable

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[32] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.93 n. 1800, ed. Marietti, 2:265a.

[33] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 8, Editio Leonina 24/2:82–83, lines 275–315.

[34] On Aquinas's views on the composition of essences and existence in angels, see Wippel, "Metaphysical Composition of Angels in Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Godfrey of Fontaines," in this volume.

[35] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia* 5, Editio Leonina 43:378, lines 44–59; *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.3 ad 4.

matter is used up by a single instantiation. At the pinnacle of the created universe there are angels. In angels, the distinction between individual and essence vanishes: their essence is individual by itself, and they are just their essence.

As it happens, Aquinas held that specific multiplicity is actually more fitting to the perfection of the universe than numerical multiplicity. It is the multiplication of species, not the numerical multiplication of individuals within a species, that adds to the perfection of the universe as a whole.[36] So it is not just impossible for several angels to exemplify the same essence; it would also be purposeless. What God intends by creating the universe is not to multiply individuals in the same species, i.e., to cause a certain essence to be instantiated several times; rather, this is just an unavoidable consequence of God's intention to create and keep in existence a universe that includes material substances. Since each immaterial substance fully actualizes its essence and, once created, cannot fail to exist and does not perish, there is no need for the essences of immaterial substances to be instantiated in more than one individual. By contrast, the essences of material substances in the sublunary world are such that they are not fully actualized in a single instantiation. Since each of their instantiations is perishable, such essences cannot be kept in existence unless there is a continuous generation of new individuals of the same kind. It is just for that reason that a numerical multiplication of individuals is allowed within the same species.[37]

Thus, we find Aquinas summarizing his position on the individuation of angels in his mature question *De spiritualibus creaturis* with three arguments to demonstrate that no two angels can belong to the same species. The first argument is his usual argument based on the immateriality of

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[36] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.3.1.4 ad 3, ed. Mandonnet, 2:98: "… perfectio universi essentialis non attenditur in individuis, quorum multiplicatio ordinatur ad perfectionem speciei, sed in speciebus per se. Unde magis apparet divina bonitas in hoc quod sunt multi angeli diversarum specierum, quam si sint unius speciei tantum." See also *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.93 n. 1799, ed. Marietti, 2:264b; and *De spiritualibus creaturis* 8, Editio Leonina 24/2:81–82, lines 235–74.

[37] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.93 n. 1798, ed. Marietti, 2:264b: "Ad hoc sunt plura individua in una specie in rebus corruptibilibus, ut natura speciei, quae non potest perpetuo conservari in uno individuo, conservetur in pluribus: unde etiam in corporibus incorruptibilibus non est nisi unum individuum in una specie. Substantiae autem separatae natura potest conservari in uno individuo: eo quod sunt incorruptibiles, ut supra ostensum est. Non igitur oportet esse plura individua in illis substantiis eiusdem speciei." See also *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.4 ad 4; *De spiritualibus creaturis* 8, Editio Leonina 24/2:82–83, lines 275–315; and *De substantiis separatis* 12, Editio Leonina 40:D 62–D 63.

angels: since angels are immaterial, and only forms received in matter can be numerically multiplied within the same species, angels cannot be numerically multiplied within the same species. The second argument is based on the order of the universe. Aquinas argues that the things which are closer to God must participate in the order of the universe more perfectly than the things which are farther away from Him. This seems to mean that whereas some features of the lower things in the universe are not subject to order, everything in the superior creatures is subject to order. Since angels are the creatures that are closest to God, everything in them is subject to order. Thus, any two angels can be ordered to one another as more or less perfect. Only species, however, can be ordered to one another as more or less perfect. As a consequence, there are no two angels within the same species. The third argument is based on the perfection of angels and on the consideration that the numerical multiplication of individuals within the same species is required only in the lowest parts of the universe, where an individual cannot contain all the perfection of its species.[38] It is therefore clear that Aquinas's position on the individuality of angels is part and parcel of his larger view on the order necessarily pertaining to the universe as created by God.

3. *Attacks on Aquinas*

Shortly after Aquinas's death, his view on the individuation of angels came under attack. On 7 March 1277, the bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, with the assistance of a committee of theologians, issued a condemnation of 220 theses that were allegedly being taught at the University of Paris, and specifically at the arts faculty. Three of these theses directly concerned the topic of angels' individuation, namely, art. 81: "That God could not make several intelligences in the same species, because they do not have matter"; art. 96: "That God cannot multiply individuals in one species without matter"; and art. 191: "That forms only receive division through matter. This is an error, unless it is understood with regard to the forms that are educed from the potency of matter."[39]

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[38] *De spiritualibus creaturis* 8, Editio Leonina 24/2:80–83, lines 189–315.

[39] David Piché, *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277: texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire* (Paris: Vrin, 1999), 104, art. 81 (43): "Quod, quia intelligentie non habent materiam, deus non posset plures eiusdem speciei facere"; 108, art. 96 (42): "Quod deus non potest multiplicare indiuidua sub una specie sine materia"; 138, art. 191 (110): "Quod forme non recipiunt diuisionem, nisi per materiam.—Error, nisi intelligatur de formis eductis

Even though the condemnation was targeted at the Masters and students of the arts faculty, the position condemned in these articles is clearly Thomas Aquinas's view on the individuation of angels. Specifically, what is rejected is Aquinas's conclusion that no two angels can belong to the same species.[40]

Shortly thereafter, in 1278, the Franciscan Master, William de la Mare, assembled a list of corrections to allegedly erroneous positions found in Thomas Aquinas's writings, and in 1282 the Franciscan Order mandated that any theology lector approaching Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* should read it with de la Mare's *Correctorium*.[41] Again, one of the errors that William de la Mare had identified in Aquinas's works was the claim that it is impossible for two angels to be in the same species.[42]

Why was Aquinas's position on the individuation of angels considered so dangerous that both the bishop of Paris and the Franciscans took so much pain to single out his teaching as erroneous? From the scanty indications contained in the 1277 condemnation and William de la Mare's remarks in his *Correctorium*, we may surmise that Aquinas's position was perceived as positing a limit on God's omnipotence. What was considered erroneous was not Aquinas's theory of individuation as such, but the fact that it entailed that not even God could create several angels in the same species. On the face of it, however, both Tempier and William de la Mare seem to have been wrong about this point. To say that God cannot bring

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de potentia materie." To these articles, we may add art. 79 (46), specifically devoted to the relationship between supposit and essence in separate substances; see Piché, *La condamnation*, 104: "Quod substantie separate sunt sua essentia, quia in eis idem est quo et quod est."

[40] See Hissette, *Enquête*, 82–87, 181–82. See also Jan A. Aertsen, "Die Thesen zur Individuation in der Verurteilung von 1277, Heinrich von Gent und Thomas von Aquin," in *Individuum und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), 249–65; John F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and the Condemnation of 1277," *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 233–72, at 243–48; Suarez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie*, 75–85; and Martin Pickavé, "The Controversy over the Principle of Individuation in *Quodlibeta* (1277–ca. 1320): A Forest Map," in *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages*, vol. 2: *The Fourteenth Century*, ed. Christopher Schabel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 17–79, at 19–21.

[41] See Palémon Glorieux, "*Pro et contra Thomam*: Un survol de cinquante années," in *Sapientiae procerum amore: Mélanges Médiévistes offerts à Dom Jean-Pierre Müller O.S.B. à l'occasion de son 70ème anniversaire*, ed. Theodor W. Köhler (Rome: Editrice Anselmiana, 1974), 255–87, at 261–63.

[42] William de la Mare, *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, in Primam partem, a. 11: "Quod impossibile est duos angelos esse eiusdem speciei," in Palémon Glorieux, *Les premières polémiques thomistes: I.–Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quare"* (Le Saulchoir, Kain: Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, 1927), 60–61. See also a. 10: "Quod angelus non est compositus ex materia et forma," ibid., 49–52.

about two incompatible states of affairs poses no threat to God's omnipotence. But according to Aquinas, that an essence is immaterial and that it can be multiply instantiated are two incompatible states of affairs. It seems that Aquinas's position does not entail any limit on God's omnipotence, after all. Thus, as scholars have not failed to notice, this criticism misses its target.[43]

Indeed, there is some evidence that the articles condemned in 1277 were put together rather hastily. Some ten years after the condemnation, in his own discussion of the individuation of angels, Giles of Rome made a point of stressing the lack of accuracy with which the committee carried out its proceedings.[44] But even allowing for some sloppiness on the committee's part, it is still a fact that Aquinas's view on the individuation of angels sparked a surprising amount of discussion and criticism after 1277. Should we conclude that all this was due to a misunderstanding?

There is, I suggest, another possibility. Even though Aquinas's position does not entail that God's power is in any way limited, the claim that it is impossible for two angels to belong to the same species remains highly controversial. What is troubling in Aquinas's position is that angels are given such an exalted status that they are actually set apart from any other creature because of the way they are individuated. Angels, unlike any other creature, are individual essences, such that not even God can make two of the same kind. God is free to create or not create an angel of a certain kind. But once God decides to create an angel of a certain kind, he cannot but create the individual angel he creates, and he cannot create more than one of that kind.

What several thinkers after Aquinas found troubling in his view was the idea that the structure of any universe God can create is such that it posits some constraints as to which *individuals* he can create within it. Of course, Aquinas did hold that God's freedom to create is not limited to just one possible universe. Rather, there are many (indeed, infinite) ways in which God can carry out his decision to create. As a consequence, there are many (indeed, infinite) sets of essences that God is free to create or not to create.[45] But for Aquinas, once God has decided to create a certain

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[43] Hissette, *Enquête*, 83.

[44] Giles of Rome, *Quodl.* 2.7 (Lovanii, 1646; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1966), 65a.

[45] On God's freedom and the possibility that his intention to create be realized in many alternative ways, see *De veritate* 24.3 co., Editio Leonina 22/3:687–88, lines 34–45.

universe, he is not completely free as to which and how many individuals to create within that universe, for there are some essences that are so perfect that they are, in themselves, individual. So, if those essences are created at all, they are necessarily instantiated only once and only in a given particular. This goes against the apparently plausible claim that any created essence can be instantiated as many times as God wants. But this is precisely the claim that Aquinas's position on the individuation of angels contradicted.

Aquinas's view that angels are individual essences was based on two premises, as we have seen. The first premise was that angels are pure forms. The second premise was that a form is numerically multiplied only if it is received in different parcels of matter. If Aquinas's conclusion was considered unacceptable, at least one of these two premises had to be rejected. So, a first possibility was to reject the first premise and to go back to Bonaventure's position that angels are composed of matter and form. William de la Mare adopted this solution.[46] But as Henry of Ghent observed, the view that there can be several angels in the same species only if angels are composed of form and matter falls under the 1277 condemnation just as much as Aquinas's view does, for both views assume that God can create two individuals of the same kind only if they differ with regard to their matter—and this is a condemned position.[47] This may have contributed to making the view that angels are composed of matter and form much less appealing than it may originally have been, since one of the reasons of its initial success was that it provided a straightforward explanation for the individuation of angels, as Bonaventure had stressed.[48]

Accordingly, it is not surprising that several thinkers after Aquinas adopted the philosophically more interesting option of rejecting the second premise of his argument, namely, that a form is numerically multiplied and individualized only if it is received in different parcels of matter.

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[46] William de la Mare, *In Sent.* 2.3.1, ed. Hans Kraml (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995), 47–49; for de la Mare's criticism of Aquinas's position, see *In Sent.* 2.3.3, ed. Kraml, 57–58.

[47] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 2.8, *Opera omnia* (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leiden: Brill, 1979ff.) 6:45.

[48] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1.1, *Opera omnia* 2:91a. Notice that Richard of Middleton held that angels are composed of matter and form but that this composition does not account for their individuation. See Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.1 (Brixiae, 1519; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963), 48–51. This also seems to be Peter of John Olivi's position. See Peter of John Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 16, ed. Jansen, 1:291–355. See Suarez-Nani, "Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique," 245–62.

Again, there were two ways open for those who rejected Aquinas's second premise. One could decide to extend Aquinas's view on the individuation of angels to all creatures. Accordingly, it could be claimed that any created essence is individual by itself and that there is no need to posit any special feature to account for an essence's individuation. The Franciscan theologian Richard of Middleton adopted this solution.[49] Since there are no common essences, any individual (whether angelic or not) differs from any other individual by its very essence.[50] All the same, Richard still acknowledged that things fall into natural kinds or species. Obviously, the reason that two things belong to the same species cannot be that they share the same essence, since there are no common or shared essences, according to Richard. Rather, two things belong to the same species if they have a "univocal similarity" in essence, i.e., if their essences are similar. Unfortunately but perhaps unsurprisingly, Richard did not explain what this "similarity in essence" amounts to (he spoke of "essential degrees of a complete essence," but this is admittedly quite obscure). Such a notion should probably be assumed to be primitive. Be that as it may, it is clear that, according to Richard, angels are not set apart from other creatures because of the special status of their essence, for *all* created essences are individual.[51]

The second way to reject Aquinas's view that a form is individualized and numerically multiplied only if it is received in matter is to claim that all created essences, whether material or immaterial, are by themselves common and that they are individualized not by matter but by something

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[49] Some years afterwards, William Ockham ended up endorsing a similar view.

[50] Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* 2.3.2.1, 58b: "Videtur ergo mihi dicendum quod substantia angeli est una numero formaliter non per aliquid reale superadditum essentiae suae sed per essentiam suam sub ratione qua indivisibilis, integritate sua salva . . . Indivisibilitas autem non dicit aliquam rem positivam, et sic unitas numeralis ipsius angeli et sua essentia non differunt nisi ratione, eo quod unitas super essentiam non addit nisi indivisibilitatem praedictam." Richard of Middleton wrote his Commentary on the *Sentences* ca. 1285–1295; see Edgar Hocedez, *Richard de Middleton: sa vie, ses œuvres, sa doctrine* (Leuven: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1925), 49–55. Richard's doctrine of individuation was endorsed by Peter of John Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 13, ed. Jansen, 1:235 and 247–55.

[51] Richard of Middleton, *In Sent.* 2.3.5.1, 60b: "Respondeo quod Deus potuit creare plures angelos in eadem specie, quia illae creaturae sunt in eadem specie quae habent univocam similitudinem in essentia nec se in aliquo essentiali gradu suae completae essentiae excedunt . . . Esse autem plures angelos tales, nullam contradictionem includit, sive habeant materiam sive non . . . Cum ergo Deus possit facere quicquid non includit contradictionem, tenendum est quod potuit facere plures angelos in specie una. Unde dominus Stephanus, Parisiensis episcopus et magister in theologia, excommunicavit istum articulum quo exprimitur quod Deus non potest multiplicare individua sub una specie sine materia."

else added to them. This way was taken by Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus.

Alternatively, one may accept Aquinas's view on the individuation of angels and show that it can be reconciled with the 1277 condemnation. Giles of Rome and the Dominican Master William of Peter Godinus argued for this claim in different ways and defended Aquinas's view against Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus, respectively.

4. *Henry of Ghent: No Created Essence is Individual*

Henry of Ghent provided the most elaborate rejection of Aquinas's position, as well as a sophisticated treatment of the individuation of angels, which influenced Duns Scotus more deeply than it may initially appear. Henry dealt with the issue of the individuation of angels on two main occasions, in his Quodlibet II, q. 8 (1277), and in his Quodlibet V, q. 8 (1280/1281).[52] To these two treatments must be added Henry's rejection, in his Quodlibet XI, q. 1 (Advent 1287), of Giles of Rome's defense of Aquinas's position. We should consider each of these treatments separately, for even though the basic points of Henry's position remained the same throughout his career, there are some differences, which probably depend on Henry's increasingly refined understanding of the topic.

4.1. *Henry of Ghent's First Account*

Let us start with Quodlibet II, q. 8.[53] Henry's treatment of the individuation of angels in this work unfolds in two steps. First, Henry gave a detailed account of why he rejected Aquinas's claim that some created essences—i.e., angelic essences—are in themselves individual. Second, Henry tried to show that the argument on which Aquinas had based his claim was a bad argument. Henry did not specifically question the validity of Aquinas's argument itself. He also accepted Aquinas's first premise, namely, that angels are pure forms. Instead, he rejected Aquinas's second premise, namely, the claim that a form is numerically multiplied only if it is received in different parcels of matter.

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[52] Henry of Ghent also refers to the individuation of angels in *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum* 28.2 (Paris, 1520; repr. St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1953), 1:166rF–vG.

[53] See Pickavé, "The Controversy," 23–29.

So what is so troubling in Aquinas's claim that angels are individual essences? According to Henry, the problem with this claim is that it entails that angels are necessary beings, i.e., beings that cannot fail to exist. In other words, Henry maintained that Aquinas's view on the individuation of angels entailed that angels are divine. Since Aquinas himself, of course, never accepted this conclusion, Henry argues that he should therefore have rejected the view that angels are individual essences. Since Aquinas did not do so, he was committed to holding two inconsistent positions.[54]

Clearly, the key premise in Henry's argument is that the claim that angels are individual essences entails that they are divine, i.e., that they cannot fail to exist. Henry's demonstration of this point depends on the link that he established between actual existence and individuation. He argued that any created essence is individualized only if it actually exists; for if an essence does not actually exist, it exists only as a mental concept, whether in the Divine, angelic, or human mind; and concepts are universal. So, according to Henry, there are no possible individuals: something is an individual if and only if it exists extramentally. But then, Henry argued that actual existence is not included in any created essence; rather, it is added to it. This means that no created essence exists necessarily. In creatures, existence is never part of what something is; rather, existence is contingent. But since it is existence that individualizes an essence, it follows that no created essence is necessarily an individual. So, there are no created individual essences. Only God is essentially individual.[55]

Interestingly, Henry held that Aristotle was not committed to the inconsistent claims that separate substances are essentially individual and that they can fail to exist. Rather, Aristotle coherently maintained that separate forms are necessary beings, because he did not accept (or

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[54] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 2.8, *Opera omnia* 6:42, lines 56–63.

[55] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 2.8, *Opera omnia* 6:38–39, lines 78–99: "Quoniam essentia creaturae cuiuslibet, quantumcumque immaterialis, neque est existens neque subsistens neque habet rationem suppositi ex hoc quod in natura sua absoluta essentia quaedam est, quia de se non habet esse nisi in conceptu mentis et intellectus divini vel angelici et humani si fuerint homo aut angelus in esse. Ita quod extra intentionem essentiae creaturae ut essentia est, sit intentio existentiae, subsistentiae et suppositi. Et sunt quaedam duo: essentia scilicet et in supposito subsistentia . . . necesse est igitur ut coniunctio illorum sit per aliam causam facientem ipsam essentiam fore subsistentem in existentia actualis suppositi. Nulla ergo essentia creaturae, ratione ea qua essentia est, habet rationem suppositi aut actualiter subsistentis. Ita quod nulla earum, quantum est ex se, de se sit singularitas quaedam, nullaque earum, sicut neque effective, sic nec formaliter est suum esse sive sua essentia, sed hoc est privilegium solius essentiae divinae quod ipsa ex se formaliter sit singularitas quaedam et idem in eo sunt essentia et existentia." Cf. Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 2.8, *Opera omnia* 6:45–46, lines 52–57.

rather, he was not aware of) the Christian notion of creation. Accordingly, he thought that something is contingent only if it is composed of matter and form. Since Aristotle held that separate forms are necessary beings, he correctly concluded that they are immaterial; and since he correctly thought that only necessary beings are individual by their very essence, he also concluded that separate forms are individual essences, and an essence can be numerically multiplied only if it is composed of matter and form. But even though Aristotle's argument was valid, it was unsound, because the premise on which it was based, i.e., that separate forms are necessary beings, was false.[56] According to Henry, Aquinas was in some way misled by Aristotle, for, on the one hand, he thought that he could uphold Aristotle's conclusion that separate forms are individual essences and that consequently no two separate forms can belong to the same essence; but, on the other hand, he rejected the foundational premise of Aristotle's argument, i.e., the view that separate forms are necessary beings. All this, according to Henry, resulted in a weak philosophical position, because the claim that separate forms are necessary beings is the one and only ground for concluding that they are individual essences. So, if we reject it we must also reject the conclusion upon which it is grounded. According to Henry, something is necessarily individual if *and only if* it is a necessary being.[57]

Let us now turn to the second aspect of Henry's treatment of the individuation of angels in his Quodlibet II, q. 8. Since Henry rejected Aquinas's

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[56] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 2.8, *Opera omnia* 6:40–41, lines 8–49. On Aristotle's position, see also *Quodl.* 5.8, ed. Badius (Paris, 1518), 155rL–vM.

[57] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 2.8, *Opera omnia* 6:41, lines 40–55: "Et sic Philosophus unumquodque *eo solo* quod separatum est a materia posuit esse unum numero, et cum hoc etiam non esse creaturam sed quandam divinam naturam . . . Ex hoc quod ponit quodlibet eorum esse deum quemdam, ponit quodlibet eorum esse ex se singularitatem quandam et quoddam necesse esse, tam propter separationem a materia, quam propter indifferentiam essentiae a supposito et existentia sua, ut alibi declaratum est . . . Quid mirum ergo, si Philosophus dicit quod in formis separatis in una specie, id est essentia, non est nisi unicum individuum? Hoc enim de necessitate sequitur, non tam ex illo quod falso posuit, non esse scilicet plura individua sub eadem specie nisi per materiam, quam ex alio, sacrilegio quod tamquam sacrilegus posuit, quod scilicet quaelibet earum deus quidam sit et quoddam necesse esse." (Italics mine.)

After Henry, Scotus explicitly criticized Aquinas for mixing up philosophy and theology in an inappropriate way, with the result of doing something which is neither philosophy nor theology (*nec est philosophari nec est theologice sentire*)—but, presumably, both bad philosophy and bad theology. See Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.7 n. 229, Editio Vaticana 18:301; *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.7 n. 239, Editio Vaticana 7:506–7; and *Reportatio* 2A.3.1, Oxford, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 133r (this part of the text is identical to that printed in the Vivès edition as *Reportatio Parisiensis* 2.3.1 n. 7, *Opera omnia* 22:582a). I wish to thank Tobias Hoffmann for calling my attention to the textual problems concerning Scotus's *Reportatio* 2A and for giving me a copy of the relevant passage from Merton College, MS 61.

conclusion that angels are individual essences, he had to reject the premise from which Aquinas had drawn it, i.e., the claim that a form is individualized and numerically multiplied if *and only if* it is received in matter.[58] As it happens, at this early stage of his career, Henry did not reject Aquinas's claim *tout court*; rather, he restricted its applicability. Henry admitted that a form is individualized and numerically multiplied if it is received in matter, but he denied that a form is individualized and numerically multiplied *only if* it is received in matter. Thus, according to Henry, it is still true that the forms of material things are individualized and numerically multiplied because they are received in different parcels of matter. Accordingly, matter *does* play the role of principle of individuation and numerical multiplication, as far as material essences are concerned.[59] This does not mean, however, that pure forms are essentially individual and not individualized by anything. As we have seen, Henry plainly rejected as inconsistent Aquinas's claim that some created essences are individual. Any created essence can be multiply instantiated.

But, then, what accounts for the actual numerical multiplication of angelic essences, if it is not their being received in matter? Henry held that the principle of individuation for angels is their efficient cause, namely, God. By creating one angel rather than another, God causes a certain essence to be instantiated as a certain individual rather than as another.[60] Since no essence is by itself individual, there is no limit to the number of instantiations that God can create. God can cause any angelic essence to be instantiated as many times as he wants. Contrary to what Aquinas had thought, the claim that several angels can share the same essence and therefore belong to the same species does not entail any contradiction.

It must be admitted that Henry constructed an impressive case for his claim that *to be by itself individual* and *to be created* are two mutually incompatible features for any essence. All the same, it seems that his argu-

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[58] Henry accepted Aquinas's other premise, i.e., that angels are pure forms.

[59] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 2.8, *Opera omnia* 6:47, lines 88–91.

[60] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 2.8, *Opera omnia* 6:47, line 93 – p. 53, line 44, esp. p. 51, lines 95–2: "Sed quia coniunctio istorum duorum, scilicet essentiae et subsistentiae in uno et in altero, non potest esse ex se ipsis—quia ex se non habent quod subsistent in effectu, ut dictum est—, sed oportet quod fiat in eis per aliam causam, facientem utrumque eorum esse alterum per essentiam existentem in actu, et hunc non esse illum et e converso—ut sit totum causatum quod est in utroque—, ideo causa individuationis eorum prima et efficiens dicendus est Deus, qui dat utrique eorum subsistentiam in effectu et seorsum." These lines come at the end of a lengthy passage where Henry, after having identified matter and quantity as the principle of individuation for material things, is focusing exclusively on angels.

ment rests on a dubious step. Even if we concede, as Henry contended, that Aristotle held that separate forms are individual essences because he thought that they were necessary beings, it still remains to be convincingly argued that a separate form is an individual essence *only if* it is a necessary being. Henry's argument was based on his questionable claim that what accounts for something's being an individual is that thing's existence, so that something is essentially individual only if existence is part of that thing's essence. But this claim is indeed questionable. Against Henry, Aquinas could have reponded that what accounts for the individuality of angels is their own essence, not the existence they receive from God, so that angelic essences are individual quite independently of the fact that God gives them existence.[61]

4.2. *Henry of Ghent's Second Account*

Some years afterwards, Henry of Ghent came back to the same issue.[62] In his Quodlibet V, q. 8 (1280/1281), he gave up the view he had shared with Aquinas, i.e., that the individuality of angels and of material things must be accounted for in two radically different ways. True, material essences are individualized by matter. But matter is what Henry called the "secondary" principle of individuation. Any essence, whether material or immaterial, is made individual by a primary principle of individuation, which Henry now described as the double negative property of not being divided in itself (i.e., not being multiply instantiated) and not being the same as anything else (i.e., being distinct from everything else).[63] Thus, in his Quodlibet II, q. 8, Henry's strategy had been to limit to material essences the applicability of Aquinas's view that a form can be numerically multiplied only if it can be received in different parcels of matter. But in Quodlibet V, q. 8, he made a more radical move. He rejected the view that a certain essence can only be multiply instantiated if it has a positive capacity to be numerically multiplied, i.e., that there must be some positive feature

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[61] Alternatively, somebody could reject Henry's position by claiming that it makes sense to speak of *possible* individuals in addition to actually existing ones. As we shall see, Scotus made this claim.

[62] See Pickavé, "The Controversy," 29–32; and Gordon A. Wilson, "Supposite in the Philosophy of Henry of Ghent," in *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of His Death (1293)*, ed. Willy Vanhamel (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 343–72, at 354–61. For a similar treatment, see Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum* 28.2, ed. Badius (Paris, 1520), 166rF–vG; and the remarks in Wilson, "Supposite," 364–65.

[63] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.8, ed. Badius, 166rM.

accounting for a form's or essence's being numerically multipliable, be it matter or anything else. Henry still conceded that matter gives to a certain essence a positive inclination to be numerically multiplied. But since an essence does not require any positive capacity for multiple instantiability in order to be multiply instantiated, it is not the case that only a material essence can be multiply instantiated.

Henry's new position was based on a distinction between potentiality and possibility. It is one thing to say that something has a potentiality or an inclination to be numerically multiplied. It is another thing to say that it is possible for a certain essence to be numerically multiplied. The possession of an inclination towards numerical multiplication implies the possession of a positive feature that accounts for a certain form's or essence's being numerically multiplied. A certain form or essence must possess or receive a certain inclination towards being multiply instantiated—and it must possess or receive that inclination by virtue of some real entity such as matter. By contrast, it is possible for something to be multiply instantiated even in the absence of such a positive feature, as long as that thing does not have a contrary feature making it impossible for it to be numerically multiplied. In order to capture an essence's non-incompatibility to being numerically multiplied, Henry used the term "dividual," which appears in Gilbert of Poitiers' works.[64] According to Henry, any created essence is in itself both undivided into individuals *and* dividual, since it lacks both any positive aptitude for being divided in individual instantiations *and* any positive feature preventing such a division from taking place.[65]

Thus, Henry identified a sense of "possibility" as mere non-incompatibility (what Henry referred to by the traditional expression of "*potentia obedientiae nuda*"), to be distinguished from the standard Aristotelian notion of potentiality, which entails the possession of a positive inclination (*aptitudo*) for something. Henry noticed that any created essence, in itself, is indivisible, that is, it does not have a positive capacity to be multiply instantiated. Nevertheless, no created essence, just because it is created, has any inclination preventing it from being multiply instanti-

[64] See, for example, Gilbert of Poitiers, *Expositio in Boecii librum Contra Euticen et Nestorium*, in *The Commentaries on Boethius by Gilbert of Poitiers*, ed. Nikolaus M. Häring (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1966), 272; 273, lines 50–57. See also Lauge O. Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Gilbert of Porreta's Thinking and the Theological Exposition of the Doctrine of the Incarnation during the Period 1130–1180* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 61. I wish to thank Christophe Erismann for directing my attention to Gilbert of Poitiers's use of this expression.

[65] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.8, ed. Badius, 164vH–165rH.

ated. Any created essence is "indifferent" to numerical multiplication: it is *possible* for it to be numerically multiplied even though it does not have any positive inclination to be numerically multiplied.

Henry's distinction between potential multiplication, on the one hand, and mere non-incompatibility to multiplication, on the other hand, was of crucial importance for his treatment of the problem of individuation. Since any essence is in itself merely non-incompatible to numerical multiplication, it is possible for any essence (whether material or immaterial) to be numerically multiplied, even though that essence may lack any positive inclination to numerical multiplication. As long as it is merely *possible* for an essence to be numerically multiplied, that essence may be actually numerically multiplied. What causes an essence to be numerically multiplied (i.e., multiply instantiated) is the principle of individuation, which is not included in the essence but can be added to it, since that essence is not incompatible with actual numerical multiplication. For example, there is nothing in the essence *felinity* preventing that essence from being instantiated in many individual cats; but neither is there something in that essence, if it is considered in itself, positively inclining it to be actually instantiated in many individual cats. The essence *felinity* is positively inclined to be instantiated in many individual cats not because it is an essence but because it is a *material* essence, i.e., an essence whose form can be received in different parcels of matter. But even an essence lacking any feature providing it with a positive inclination to be numerically multiplied (i.e., an immaterial essence) can be actually numerically multiplied, as long as it does not have any positive property preventing it from being numerically multiplied.

So, what accounts for an essence's being actually instantiated in many individuals? According to Henry, what makes an essence actually instantiated in individuals is not a property included in the essence itself; rather, it is something added to it. This is obviously entailed by his view that an essence in itself (i.e., just as an essence, whether material or immaterial) is indifferent to numerical multiplication.[66] Also, Henry maintained that what accounts for an essence's being multiply instantiated is not a positive property. Rather, it is a double negative property, i.e., the property

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[66] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.8, ed. Badius, 164vE–F. See in particular 164vE: "Quod enim humanitas sit haec et illa et quod haec non sit illa, hoc est extraneum et extra naturam humanitatis simpliciter ut humanitas est." Henry of Ghent took this to be Avicenna's doctrine as found in *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina* 5.1, ed. Simone Van Riet (Leuven: Peeters; Leiden: Brill, 1980), Avicenna Latinus 4:228–29.

of not being divided in itself (i.e., not being multiply instantiated) and of being divided, i.e., distinct, from everything else. Since it is possible for any created essence, whether material or immaterial, to be determined by this double negative property, it is possible for any created essence to be multiply instantiated. Henry actually maintained that any created essence receives this double negative determination by the very act of receiving actual existence in an individual (what Henry called "being of existence," *esse existentiae*). It follows that any created thing is individualized by its creator's act of giving it existence, as Henry had already said in Quodlibet II about separate forms.[67]

Henry's position may be regarded as a distinction between two possible ways of interpreting the question of the numerical multiplication of an essence. When we ask what accounts for an essence's being divided in individual instantiations, we may be asking two different questions, which would require two different answers. First, we may be asking what accounts for an essence's being *divisible* into individuals, i.e., why it is logically possible for an essence to be divided into individuals. Henry's answer to this question is that no feature added to the essence itself is required in order to account for its divisibility into instantiations, for any created essence is in itself divisible, i.e., multiply instantiable, just because it is not a necessary being. Second, we may be asking what accounts for an essence's being *actually divided* into individuals. Henry's answer is that a double negative property must be added to the essence, i.e., the property of not being divided in itself and of being divided from everything else. This double negative property does not pertain to any created essence if taken by itself, since any created essence, in itself, is both divisible into instances and common to its instances. All the same, there is nothing in a created essence that prevents it from receiving and being determined by that double negative property, i.e., from being individualized.

Some aspects of Henry's view of individuation would be rejected by his successors, notably by Scotus. Scotus retains, however, a fundamental aspect of Henry's treatment of this issue, namely, the claim that an essence can be multiply instantiated even if it lacks any positive feature giving it an inclination to be multiply instantiated.[68] All that an essence requires in order to be numerically multiplied is the lack of any positive feature pre-

[67] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.8, ed. Badius, 166rM.

[68] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.1, 28–32, Editio Vaticana 18:236–37; *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.1 nn. 29–34, Editio Vaticana 7:402–5.

venting it from being numerically multiplied. Since any created essence is in itself indifferent to numerical multiplication, any created essence can be multiply instantiated. As a consequence, God can create many angels in the same species, contrary to what Aquinas had held.

5. *Giles of Rome and Henry of Ghent's Response*

Before turning to Scotus's account of the individuation of angels, let us consider Giles of Rome's attempt to defend Aquinas's position against the 1277 condemnation. In his Quodlibet II, q. 7, Giles tried to show that Aquinas's position could be interpreted in such a way that it did not entail the condemned claim that God cannot create many angels in the same species.[69]

Giles's strategy was based on the distinction between what God can do, absolutely speaking, and what is fitting (*conveniens*) for him to do, given the universe he has decided to create, i.e., in the current order of things. Even though God's action is not limited by the created universe with regard to what he *can* do, the universe God decides to create does pose some constraints with regard to what is fitting or unfitting for him to do, i.e., what God *should* do. Specifically, Giles argued that God can create several angels in the same species, as the 1277 condemnation required, but that that would be unfitting, given the current order of things. Since we must assume that everything God creates fits the plan according to which he decides to act, we should conclude that, given the current order of things, no two angels belong to the same species.[70]

So, how did Giles argue that it is unfitting for God to create several angels in the same species, given the current order of things? Giles's conclusion was that if God created many angels in the same species in the

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[69] Giles of Rome, *Quodl.* 2.7, 64–69. Cf. also *Quodl.* 1.8, 17–19. For a much later treatment of the same topic, see Giles of Rome, *In Sent.* 2.3.1.2.1–2 and *In Sent.* 2.3.1.2.3 (Venice: 1581; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968), 179b–188a and 198a–201b. See Pickavé, "The Controversy," 38–40.

[70] Giles of Rome, *Quodl.* 2.8, 65a: "Ita et in proposito dicere possumus Deum quidem posse, sed secundum hunc ordinem quem nunc positum videmus, quantum in praesenti nobis occurrit, non convenire ut faciat plures angelos in eadem specie." Giles himself connected the distinction between what God can do and what it is fitting for Him to do to the distinction between God's ordained and absolute power; on this, see William J. Courtenay, "The Dialectic of Divine Omnipotence," in Courtenay, *Covenant and Causality in Medieval Thought: Studies in Philosophy, Theology and Economic Practice* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), ch. 4; and Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Lubrina, 1990).

current order of things, he would create them less perfect than they could be, which is unfitting with respect to God's wisdom and goodness. The argument whereby Giles reached this conclusion is based on the notion that existence comes in degrees, and that, for any particular form, there is an optimal degree of existence that a thing can possess. The fact that there is an optimal degree of existence that a material thing can possess is compatible with there being many things of the same kind, for the form of each individual thing is limited by the matter it is received in. Consequently, the potentiality of the form of a material thing, say the form *felinity*, to be received in other parcels of matter is never exhausted or fully actualized. So, such a form can always be received in a further parcel of matter independently of how many times that form has already been instantiated. By contrast, the optimal degree of existence that a pure form such as an angel can receive is incompatible with there being many forms of the same kind, for that form is not limited by any matter and is therefore in itself unlimited; consequently, a single instantiation of that form realizes all the potentialities of that form, and there is room for further instantiations only if those instantiations are less perfect, i.e., if any further instantiation of that form receives less existence than it could receive.[71]

Apart from assuming the peculiar notion that existence comes in degrees, Giles also assumed the equally peculiar view that matter participated in a certain form by literally dividing that form into parts. As Giles said elsewhere, "to participate" in something means "to take a part" of something (*participare est partem capere*).[72] Thus, there can be many individuals of the same kind, i.e., participating in the same form, only if that form is divided among different portions of matter. Since a pure form is not received in matter and accordingly is not divided among different portions of matter, a pure form cannot be multiply instantiated, unless each instantiation takes "less" of that form than it could take and, consequently, leaves some "left over" of that form for other instantiations of the same form to use.

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[71] Giles of Rome, *Quodl.* 2.8, 65b–68b, esp. 68a: "Imaginandum est enim quod, secundum naturae cursum, Deus det tantum de esse ipsis substantiis separatis quantum possunt ipsae recipere . . . Et hinc, si formae materiales non habeant esse perfectum et totale, hoc fiat propter materiam in qua recipiuntur. At vero, si formae immateriales non habeant esse perfectum secundum suam speciem, hoc fiat quia Deus restringit eas et non dat eis totum esse secundum existentiam propriae speciei."

[72] See Giles of Rome, *Theoremata de esse et essentia*, ed. Edgar Hocedez (Leuven: Museum Lessianum, 1930), 17.

In his Quodlibet XI, q. 1, Henry of Ghent rejected Giles's attempt to rescue Aquinas's position from the 1277 condemnation. Henry did not focus on the details of Giles's metaphysical views on existence and participation. Rather, Henry's general position was that it makes no sense to say that God can do something that is unfitting. More specifically, Henry showed that, contrary to his intentions, Giles ended up positing some limits on God's power.

Henry noticed that Giles's solution was based on the assumption that, if God creates several angels in the same species, he cannot create them equally and supremely perfect, i.e., he cannot give each one of them as much existence as they can receive. But why is this the case? Giles had assumed that it is impossible, and so beyond God's power, to give each angel as much existence he can receive if several angels are created in the same species. But, Henry argued, this assumption does not hold. Since God is omnipotent, he can give as much existence to any instantiation of an essence as that essence is capable of receiving. There is no reason why God should be compelled to give to an essence *less* existence than that essence can receive, unless we are willing to posit a limit on God's power. This is not due to what a created essence is in itself, for any essence is in itself indifferent to being multiply instantiated. But this is not due to some limit in God's power either, since there is no limit to God's power. Accordingly, Giles's claim that God cannot create many angels in the same species unless he creates them less perfect than they could be is unwarranted. So, Giles's contention that it would be unfitting for God to create several angels in the same species is similarly unwarranted.[73]

6. *Duns Scotus: Every Essence is Common*

Scotus agreed with Aquinas and Henry of Ghent that angels are immaterial. Accordingly, he acknowledged that the solution one gives to the question concerning their individuation and numerical multiplication depends on the way one accounts for individuation in material things. If one holds that extended matter alone accounts for an essence's being numerically multipliable and for each of its instantiations' not being further multipliable, one must conclude that it is impossible for several angels to be in the same species. Aquinas had endorsed that view. Scotus, like Henry,

[73] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 11.1, ed. Badius, 439rV–vY. See Pickavé, "The Controversy," 40–43.

rejected it. As a consequence, Scotus, like Henry, claimed that there can be many angels in the same species.[74]

Scotus's own position owes much to Henry's treatment of this topic. Scotus held that each essence is indifferent to numerical multiplication, namely, that no essence has a positive incompatibility to being multiply instantiated. This is true of both material and immaterial essences. Consequently, each angelic essence is individuated by a contracting feature, which is external to the essence itself. But, unlike Henry of Ghent, Scotus argued that such a contracting feature is a positive entity and not a double negation, for no negation can contract an essence and make that essence, which is in itself only potentially instantiated, actually instantiated in a certain individual.[75]

Thus, Scotus followed Henry in his rejection of Aquinas's key claim that angelic essences are unlike any other created essence because they are *individual* essences. According to Scotus, no essence is individual by itself; rather, all essences are in themselves common and are accordingly individualized by a contracting feature added to them. Since angelic essences, like any other essence, are in themselves common, nothing prevents them from being instantiated many times. Consequently, there can be several angels in the same species.

Two aspects of Scotus's treatment are particularly noteworthy. First, Scotus stressed that the claim that every essence is common holds true, up to a certain point, not just for created essences but for any essence whatsoever, God's essence included.[76] It is just a defining characteristic of any essence to be common, i.e., to be communicable to different suppos-

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[74] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.7 n. 207, Editio Vaticana 18:296; *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.7 n. 225, Editio Vaticana 7:498–99; *Reportatio* 2A.3.1, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 133r.

[75] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.7 n. 209, Editio Vaticana 18:296: "Ideo dicendum est . . . quod ex quo per se ratio individuandi naturam specificam est aliqua entitas contrahens naturam, quae est extra rationem quiditatis et naturae, ad quam natura est in potentia, et omnis natura limitata est huiusmodi,—quare ipsa est contrahibilis et determinabilis et in potentia, et ideo sicut non est de se haec, ita potest per illam entitatem formalem contrahi et determinari quae invenitur in omni natura limitata . . ." Cf. Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.5–6 nn. 164–72, Editio Vaticana 18:280–84; and *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.5–6 nn. 168–88, Editio Vaticana 7:474–84.

[76] Similarly, Henry of Ghent held that the divine essence is communicable and that it is in each divine supposit through communication and not through individuation. Henry's argument, however, was based not on God's infinity but on God's simplicity, i.e., on the lack of any composition between essence and existence and between supposit and essence. See *Summa* 28.5, ed. Badius, 168vC–169rD; *Summa* 32.5, ed. Raymond Macken, *Opera omnia* (Leiden: Brill; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979ff.), 17:114–15; and *Summa* 34.2, ed. Macken, 175–79. See Wilson, "Supposite," 368–70.

its. There is, of course, a difference between the way the divine essence, on the one hand, and created essences, on the other hand, are common. The divine essence is appropriated by each divine person in virtue of relations internal to the divine essence itself. By contrast, a created essence is appropriated by each individual in virtue of a feature that is external to that essence, i.e., the principle of individuation. In turn, this difference depends on the divine essence's infinity. Since the divine essence is infinite, nothing can be external to it—including what contracts that essence to each person of the Trinity. As a consequence, for Scotus, a created essence is individualized and contracted in each of its instantiations, i.e., it is numerically multiplied in different individuals. In contrast, the divine essence is itself an individual and, because of its infinity, is communicated to each divine person without losing its individuality.[77] Thus, Scotus, like Henry, rejected Aquinas's claim that angels are individual essences because it is incompatible with the view that angels are created. But his reason for rejecting this claim is different from Henry's. According to Henry, as we have seen, no created essence can be an individual essence, because only something that necessarily exists, such that its existence is included in its very essence, is in itself individual, i.e., necessarily individual. By contrast, Scotus argued that an essence can be an individual essence (in Scotus's terms, an essence that is contracted by a feature internal to itself) only if it is infinite, for nothing is external to what is infinite. Accordingly, Scotus held that Aquinas's position is incompatible not so much with the claim that angels are created and that therefore existence is not included in their essence, as Henry had argued; rather, Aquinas's position is incompatible with the claim that angels are created and consequently *finite* essences.[78]

A second aspect worth noticing is Scotus's explicit rejection of the claim that any difference among forms is a difference in species. Aquinas had subscribed to that claim as a consequence of his view that a form is

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[77] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.7 n. 227, Editio Vaticana 7:500: "... omnis quiditas—quantum est ex se—est communicabilis, etiam quiditas divina; nulla autem est communicabilis in identitate numerali, nisi sit infinita; igitur quaelibet alia est communicabilis, et hoc cum distinctione numerali,—et ita propositum. Quod autem omnis quiditas sit communicabilis, patet, quia hoc sibi non repugnat ex perfectione, cum hoc quiditati divinae conveniat,—nec ex imperfectione, cum hoc conveniat generabilibus et corruptibilius; quare etc." See also *Lectura* 2.3.1.7 n. 210, Editio Vaticana 18:296–97; and *Reportatio* 2A.3.1, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 133r. On the communicability of the divine essence, see Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus on God* (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2005), 165–70.

[78] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.7 n. 216, Editio Vaticana 18:297–98; *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.7 n. 238, Editio Vaticana 7:505–6; *Reportatio* 2A.3.1, Merton College, MS, 61, fol. 133r.

numerically multiplied only if it is received in a different parcel of matter. According to Aquinas, if a form is not received in matter but is what is called a "pure form," it follows that that form cannot be numerically multiplied, i.e., there cannot be many individual instantiations of that form. As a consequence, two different forms will always differ (at least) specifically because it is impossible for them to differ numerically, i.e., as two instantiations of the same form. Scotus, however, rejected Aquinas's view that forms are numerically multiplied only if they are received in matter. Thus, there may be many individual instantiations of the same form even if that form is not received in matter. As a consequence, two things may differ in form and still be specifically the same. More precisely, two things differ in form and are specifically the same if and only if: (*a*) each of them is a separate form; and (*b*) each of them is an instantiation of specifically the same form, which is individualized in each of them by a distinct contracting feature. Scotus noticed that even Aquinas had to admit that forms can be different from each other but not *specifically* different, since he acknowledged that separated human souls are numerically different and still specifically the same.[79]

Scotus struck at the heart of Aquinas's conception of the relationship between God and his creation when he criticized Aquinas's claim that God only intends to create a universe with a variety of essences and that, consequently, the numerical multiplicity of individuals within the same species should be regarded as a byproduct of God's action. As we have seen, Aquinas held that God creates certain essences in such a way that they can be instantiated more than once just because the perfect actualization and the permanence of those essences can be assured only by a plurality of individuals. Such is the case with material things in the sublunary world. Any angelic essence, however, enjoys permanent existence even in its single instantiation; consequently, God creates angels in such a way that their essences cannot be multiply instantiated—which, according to Aquinas, is a sign of their perfection. By contrast, Scotus explicitly held that both specific essences *and* individuals are the primary objects of God's creative action, for it is God's intention to share his goodness not just with a variety of essences but also with a plurality of individuals. Accordingly, it is particularly fitting that there can be many individu-

[79] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.7 nn. 218–21, Editio Vaticana 18:298–99; *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.7 nn. 241–46, Editio Vaticana 7:508–11; *Reportatio* 2A.3.1, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 133r. For Aquinas's position, see note 23 above.

als sharing the same essence among angels, who are the closest to God among all creatures.[80]

In 1306, Scotus returned to the topic of the individuation of angels in the course of a public disputation on individuation he held in the Paris theology faculty with the Dominican theologian and follower of Aquinas, William of Peter Godinus. In the course of the debate, Scotus rehearsed the basic points of his view on the individuation of angels against Godinus's defense of Aquinas's position. With regard to the 1277 condemnation, Godinus did not try to show that Aquinas's position should be interpreted only *de potentia ordinata*, as Giles had done. Rather, Godinus argued that it was the articles condemned in 1277 that should be interpreted in a different way. According to Godinus, the real target of the condemnation was not the view that there cannot be many angels in the same species; rather, the intention was to condemn the Averroistic view of the unicity of the possible intellect, according to which all human beings share numerically the same intellect. Scotus had an easy job to show that such a strained reading was not grounded on the text of the condemned articles.[81]

Conclusion

The debate over the individuation of angels provided later medieval philosophers with an exceptional opportunity to spell out their views about

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[80] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.7 n. 251, Editio Vaticana 7:513–14: "In toto universo, licet principaliter ordo attendatur secundum distinctionem specierum, in quibus est imparitas, pertinens ad ordinem . . . non tantum intenditur ista imparitas, quae est 'unum requisitum' ad ordinem (scilicet specierum), sed etiam paritas individuorum (scilicet in eadem specie), quae est 'aliud concurrens' ad ordinem. Et simpliciter individua intenduntur ab ipso Primo prout ipsum intendit aliquid 'aliud a se' non ut finem, sed ut aliquid aliud ad finem; unde propter bonitatem suam communicandam, ut propter suam beatitudinem, plura in eadem specie produxit. In principalissimis autem entibus est a Deo principaliter intentum individuum." See also *Rep*. 1A.36.3–4 n. 61, ed. Timothy B. Noone, "Scotus on Divine Ideas," *Medioevo* 24 (1998): 359–453, at 445, also edited as *Rep*. 1A.36.2.1–2 n. 146, in Duns Scotus, *The Examined Report of the Paris Lecture. Reportatio I–A. Latin text and English Translation*, ed. Allan B. Wolter and Oleg V. Bychkov (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications: 2004–2008), 2:429. On this topic, see Tobias Hoffmann, "Ideen der Individuen und *intentio naturae*: Duns Scotus im Dialog mit Thomas von Aquin und Heinrich von Gent," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 46 (1999): 138–52, at 149.

[81] See the dispute between Duns Scotus and William of Peter Godinus, *Utrum materia sit principium individuationis*, as edited in Clemens Stroick, "Eine Pariser Disputation vom Jahre 1306: Die Verteidigung des thomistischen Individuationsprinzips gegen Johannes Duns Scotus durch Guillelmus Petri de Godinus OP," in *Thomas von Aquino: Interpretation und Rezeption. Studien und Texte*, ed. Willehad Paul Eckert (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1974), 559–608, at 591, 593, 604.

the structure of the created world. Specifically, the controversy centered on the notion of an individual essence. Granted that creatures are distinguished into natural kinds and that something belongs to a certain natural kind by virtue of its essence, the key question was whether any created essence is in itself common, i.e., multiply instantiable, or whether it is possible or maybe even necessary for some of them to be individual. The debate entered its most dramatic phase when Thomas Aquinas contended that, even though material essences are multiply instantiable, angels should be set apart from among all other created things because their essences are individual. Several critics were troubled by Aquinas's view that some created essences are such that, if they are instantiated at all, they are necessarily instantiated just once and not just as *an* individual but as *this particular* individual. Such a view entailed that, once God has decided to create a certain angelic essence, he is left neither a choice with regard to which individual angel to create nor a capacity to instantiate that essence more than once.

Accordingly, much of the discussion centered around what makes a certain essence multiply instantiable. According to Aquinas, an essence is multiply instantiable only if its form is received in different parcels of matter. By contrast, Henry of Ghent argued that there is no need to account for an essence's being multiply instantiable apart from the fact that created essences have no positive feature preventing them from being multiply instantiable. In other words, an essence does not have to possess a positive feature enabling it to be numerically multiplied in order to be capable of numerical multiplication. Even though John Duns Scotus disagreed with Henry of Ghent over the nature of what individualizes a certain essence, both thinkers contended that every created essence (and, in some sense, according to Scotus, any essence whatsoever) is in itself common.

The odd man out in this debate was Richard of Middleton, who held that all essences are, by themselves, individual and that any two things belong to the same species if and only if they are univocally similar in their essences. After Richard, Scotus famously argued that one can make no sense of the talk of similarity in essence unless one posits a common essence shared by different individuals.[82] As is well known, Scotus's claim did not go unchallenged.

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[82] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.1.1 nn. 8–27, Editio Vaticana 18:231–36; *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.1 nn. 7–28, Editio Vaticana 7:384–402.

In addition to the metaphysical issues concerning the notions of common and individual essence and the distinction between possibility and potentiality, other key aspects in the debate over the individuation of angels were the problems of God's freedom and power and of the place that individuals occupy in God's creation. Aquinas's view that there cannot be several angels in the same species forced those entering the debate after him to take a stance on some fundamental questions. Given that God has decided to create a world with certain essences, is it completely up to him which and how many individuals to create? Is it conceivable that some essences are such that they cannot be multiply instantiated even by God's power? What constraints, if any, does the created world posit on God's freedom and power? And is the plurality of individuals within a certain species an intended result of God's action or just a byproduct of his intention to create a fully diversified universe? These were some of the issues that lay behind the apparently innocuous question of whether there can be several angels in the same species, and that would be investigated in later medieval discussions concerning the individuation of angels.

ANGELIC TIME AND MOTION: BONAVENTURE TO DUNS SCOTUS

Richard Cross

Angels are immaterial beings; time and motion seem to be features solely of material reality. So, the very title of my chapter might be thought oxymoronic. But the medievals held that the duration of an angel is not necessarily infinite, and that angels are capable of certain sorts of temporary activity, and even of causally interacting with the material world. These claims require angels to be related, somehow or other, to both time and place. And according to the medievals, angelic causal activities are not restricted to particular places. This entails, in turn, that we need to be able to give some account of how angels come to interact with different parts of the material universe: how, in other words, they might move. As I shall try to show, the medievals proposed sharply conflicting solutions to these various questions, all of which were hotly debated in the schools. In what follows, I try to give a flavor of some of these disputes, and of the most interesting philosophical moves made in the debates. I make no attempt to be thorough; I cherry-pick what seem to me to be the highlights, while trying to maintain some kind of coherent narrative. I begin with motion, and then turn to consider time. And in order to understand the varieties of accounts of angelic motion, we need a grasp of the options for angelic location. So, I start briefly with location, treating only those aspects of the debates that are required for an understanding of angelic motion.

1. *Angelic Motion*

1.1. *The Presupposition for Motion: Angelic Location*

All the medieval philosophers held that angels can move. But the accounts they give of this depend on their prior accounts of what it is for an angel to occupy a space. So, I begin with this, and then see how these accounts of space-occupancy differ, and then show how the accounts impact the notions of angelic motion.[1] In standard Aristotelian understandings of

[1] I deal with some of these issues at greater length in my "The Condemnations of 1277 and Henry of Ghent on Angelic Location," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their*

place, for a body to be in a place is for it to be contained by another body: place is "the innermost motionless boundary of what contains."[2] Clearly, immaterial substances cannot be in places in this way: they are not contained by, or enclosed by, bodies. So, an alternative is required, and the alternative that many theologians adopted is to make the idea of some kind of *causal* presence central. Thus, the key debate focuses on whether the relationship between immaterial substances and material ones—the *presence* of immaterial substances—is to be construed fundamentally in causal terms, or as involving some further relationship or relationships as well. The question is fully general: it includes not merely the presence of angels but also the presence of God in the universe, the only difference being in terms of restrictions on angelic presence that do not apply in the case of God. (The human soul is a different case, and I ignore it here.) Aquinas, for example, focuses on the question of causal relations:

> It pertains to an angel to be in a place, but an angel and a body are said to be in a place in quite different senses. For a body is in a place by its being applied to a place through the contact of dimensive quantity. But there is no dimensive quantity in angels; rather, there is in them a quantity of power. Therefore, an angel is said to be in a corporeal place by application of the power of an angel to a place in some way.[3]

And more explicitly:

> An angel, and any incorporeal substance, is in a body or a place only through an operation that causes some effect in it [viz., the body or place].[4]

When we speak of an angel being in a place, what we mean is simply that the angel causes an effect at a place. Aquinas holds much the same for God's presence in the universe too:

> It is clear that it is necessary for God to be everywhere and in all things, for mover and moved must be contiguous, as Aristotle proves in Book VII of the *Physics*. But God moves all things to their operations[5] . . . He is therefore

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Function and Significance, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), 73–88.

[2] Aristotle *Phys*. 4.4.212a20–21.

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.52.1 co.

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *In Sent*. 1.37.3.1 co., ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 1:871.

[5] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.68 nn. 2422–23, ed. P. Marc (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1961–1967), 3:92a.

> in all things . . . Since therefore God is the universal cause of all being . . . it is necessary that, wherever being can be found, divine presence is there.[6]

Aquinas concedes that, in this sense, God is everywhere. An angel cannot be everywhere, because of its limited power. The technical term for limited non-spatial causal presence is *definitive* presence, contrasted with the spatial presence proper to bodies: *circumscriptive* presence (since the body is circumscribed by its container, and is commensurate with it).[7]

Now, Aquinas's position has a great deal of intuitive appeal, as it is hard to see what else over and above causal presence could be relevant to the issue of the presence of an immaterial substance in space. But among a series of 220 articles condemned in 1277 by Stephen Tempier, the bishop of Paris, is included the following—article 204:

> That separated substances are somewhere by operation, and that they cannot move from one extreme to another, or into the medium, other than because they can will to operate either in the extreme or in the medium—this is an error, if it be understood that a substance is not in a place, nor moves from place to place, without operation.[8]

And Duns Scotus, a few years later, took this to amount to a condemnation of Aquinas's position:

> Against this [viz., the opinion of Aquinas] is that it was condemned, as a certain article condemned and excommunicated by the Bishop of Paris.[9]

As Scotus explains, on Aquinas's view,

> It would follow that an angel is sometimes (indeed, frequently) nowhere, for it does not do anything in the heavenly empyreum (since that is neither changeable nor mobile); therefore it is nowhere in the heavenly empyreum. But it is there for the most part.[10]

Thus, "for the most part," it is "nowhere." Scotus, in line with the 1277 condemnations, wants to be able to speak of the presence of an angel

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[6] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.68 n. 2425, ed. Marietti, 3:92b.

[7] *Summa theologiae* 1a.52.2 co. The distinction originates in Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* 1.37.6 n. 1 (Grottaferrata, Rome: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1971–1981), 1:270.

[8] Stephen Tempier, *Articuli condemnati anno 1277*, edited by David Piché, *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277: texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire* (Paris: Vrin, 1999), 140.

[9] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.1–2 n. 200, Editio Vaticana 7:244.

[10] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.1–2 n. 207, Editio Vaticana 7:249.

independently of its operation, and he does so by talking explicitly of an angel's being *in* a place, even though the angel lacks any kind of extended structure. In the technical language, an angel is restricted to a "determinate" place, one equal to it somehow,[11] but not such that the place and the angel are commensurate with each other. For commensuration, there is required a relationship between the parts of the substance and the parts of the place,[12] and that the substance be "contained" by the place—that it completely fill it up, as it were.[13] In Scotus's view, rather, the angel interpenetrates its place, and it does so without itself having extended parts. The whole angel is located in the whole place, but its parts are not colocated with the parts of the place. (As to whether an angel could occupy a point, Scotus tends to the affirmative side of the debate, but not strongly so.)[14] At any rate, this allows Scotus to affirm that an inactive angel still has some sort of location, which is in line with the 1277 condemnation. But as to what this location-relationship is supposed to be, Scotus is silent, and the view seems to me probably incomprehensible.

1.2. *Varieties of Angelic Motion*

For Aquinas, as just noted, an angel's presence amounts to its having an effect at a place. In line with this, angelic motion is simply an angel's having successive effects at different places:

> Since an angel is not in a place other than in virtue of the contact of power . . . it is necessary that the motion of an angel in a place is nothing other than different contacts at different places, successively and not simultaneously . . . And for this sort of contact it is not necessary that they be continuous.[15]

It is, according to Aquinas, certainly possible for an angel's motion to be continuous, in a way analogous to the motion of bodies.[16] But it need not be. An angel could first have an effect at such-and-such a place, and then

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[11] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.1–2 nn. 239–40, Editio Vaticana 7:262–63; see esp. the summary at n. 242, Editio Vaticana 7:262–63, 264.

[12] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.1–2 n. 245, Editio Vaticana 7:265.

[13] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.1–2 n. 237, Editio Vaticana 7:238.

[14] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.1–2 n. 242, Editio Vaticana 7:264.

[15] "Quia enim angelus non est in loco nisi secundum contactum virtutis . . . necesse est quod motus angeli in loco nihil aliud sit quam diversi contactus diversorum locorum successive et non simul . . . Huiusmodi autem contactus non est necessarium esse continuos"; *Summa theologiae* 1a.53.1 co.

[16] *Summa theologiae* 1a.53.1 co.

have an effect at a place greatly distant from the first place; and it could do so without having any effects in the intervening places.[17]

Scotus's view is, as we might expect, very different from this. On the question of angelic motion in the case that an angel is first at such-and-such a place and then at a place greatly distant from the first place, Scotus argues that the order of places in the universe entails that an angel would have to "travel" through all the intervening places, such that greater distance would more greatly "impede" the angel's action—again likening an angel to a natural, physical body.[18] In this, Scotus agrees with Henry of Ghent. Henry seems to imply that, if Aquinas's view on angelic location were correct, an angel could indeed have successive causal effects at greatly distant places. But on the view that "an angel has location (*situm*) in a place without operation in it (as is posited by a certain article whose opposite is condemned),"[19] it follows that an angel's movement from place to place requires that it occupy all the intervening places too:

> It is necessary that an angel, in traveling from one location to another—for example, from a point in the east to a point in the west—travel through all the intermediate parts of the space, and all the points existing in them.[20]

On the face of it, this makes instantaneous angelic motion impossible. Henry hypothesized, however, that instantaneous angelic travel was

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[17] *Summa theologiae* 1a.53.2 co.

[18] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.8 n. 515, Editio Vaticana 7:386–87. Puzzlingly, Scotus seems to hold that an angel could "leap" from place to place provided that it did not spend any time at each place: see *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.7 n. 504, Editio Vaticana, 7:382. Presumably, the thought is that the instantaneous occupation of a place in some sense does not amount to the angel's *really* occupying the place, such that this kind of travel would not fall foul of Scotus's standard criticisms of angelic leaping—which I discuss straight after this. Scotus does not say. But in any case, the view seems to entail that angelic time—which Scotus explicitly identifies with corporeal time (see *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.4 n. 158 and n. 161, Editio Vaticana 7:225 and 227)—is atomic, composed of immediately adjacent non-extended indivisibles. Scotus denies this entailment, on the highly dubious grounds that I (for example) can have immediately successive instantaneous thoughts, and that this possibility (!) does not entail that time is composed of immediate indivisibles (see *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.4 nn. 163, Editio Vaticana, 7:227–28). If I have understood Scotus correctly here, all of this is simply a gross error, and I can think of nothing to say by way of mitigation—particularly since Scotus is generally extremely careful to avoid any kind of atomism. On this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 118–37, 214–20.

[19] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 13.7, *Opera omnia* (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leiden: Brill, 1979ff.) 18:45.

[20] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 13.7, *Opera omnia* 18:46.

possible, but only on condition that the angel instantaneously occupy, in some sense, *all* the intervening places:

> The whole [continuum] is [traversed] in the same instant of angelic time, and thus of our [time], because [the angel] is in [the points] only in transit, and thus in potency.[21]

The trick here has to do with Aristotelian claims about the composition of a continuum. In response to Zeno's paradoxes of the infinite—according to which continua are composed of infinitely many points—Aristotle proposed that any finite distance includes infinitely many points merely *potentially*: in traversing a finite distance, there are not in reality infinitely many points to pass through, and thus no reason to suppose that motion is impossible, as Zeno argued.[22] Henry develops this view further: if the places do not *actually* exist, there is no objection to passing through them instantaneously.

On the face of it, the argument is not sound. Aristotle's claim that there are not actually infinitely many points to be traversed in a continuum does not entail the possibility of infinite speed. Scotus disagrees with Henry's view, not because he has objections in principle to the notion of infinite angelic speed but because Henry's view, if generalized to allow angelic travel between any two places, howsoever distant, would entail that there was in principle no limit to the size of the place that an angel can occupy—and as we saw above, Scotus holds that angels have determinate place:

> When [Henry] posits that in such an instant [an angel] can change such that it simultaneously has many places equal to it (such that there will not be an order between them other than one of nature or imagination, not of duration)—it seems impossible that an angel should have, by its natural power, many places equal to it "in one instant of its time and ours."[23]

So, Scotus has no objections in principle to infinite angelic speed under certain circumstances; all he finds objectionable in Henry's view is the implication that an angel does not occupy a determined place. On Henry's account, the angel would need to occupy the *whole* place—both the starting and finishing places, and all the places in between—and Scotus does not believe this to be generally possible. For example, he has no problem

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[21] Ibid.
[22] See, e.g., Aristotle *Phys*. 3.7.207b12–13.
[23] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.7 n. 499, Editio Vaticana 7:379.

envisaging instantaneous angelic motion between overlapping places: perhaps by shape-shifting, or (in the case the Scotus considers explicitly) by a slight sideways shuffle.[24] In this case, I assume, the angel is occupying less space than it can possibly occupy. In moving between overlapping places it instantaneously increases its size, and then decreases it again in the new place; but the two places together cannot be larger than the total place that the angel can occupy.[25]

As we saw above, there is some sense in which angels are spatially indivisible: they occupy their places not circumscriptively but definitively, and spatial divisibility requires that each part of a body be contained by just one corresponding part of its place. This raises a problem for a convinced Aristotelian such as Scotus. According to Aristotle, it is impossible for spatial indivisibles to move. If Aristotle is right, it looks as though it will be impossible for angels to move too. Equally, Aristotle holds that the finite speed of motion is explained by physical resistance. Angels lack resistance; so their motion, if possible at all, will of necessity be infinitely fast. Scotus devotes much of his discussion of angelic motion to a consideration of these problems. Again, it looks as though neither of these issues arises if the presence of an angel is analyzed merely in terms of its causal activity: they arise only if the presence of the angel is held to require something more than merely causal activity. I focus on Scotus here because he, more than anyone else, attempted to think through what we might want to say given the 1277 denial of Aquinas's position on angelic location.[26] That Scotus is led into affirming so many apparent absurdities is, I think, simply a testament to the complete wrong-headedness, in 1277, of the Paris theology Masters and the bishop of Paris on the question of angelic location.[27]

Scotus begins by citing Aristotle's three arguments against the possibility of the motion of an indivisible: I give two of them, followed by Scotus's replies. First:

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[24] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.8 n. 516, Editio Vaticana 7:387.

[25] This view seems to entail immediate time atoms. But Scotus seems happy with this supposition in this context: see note 18 above.

[26] Scotus uses the question of angelic motion to deal with the general philosophical or mathematical problem of the composition of a continuum, developing an extensive and sophisticated defense of the infinite divisibility of a continuum, i.e., its non-atomic character. I have discussed the issue at length elsewhere, and here simply suppose that any form of atomism is false: see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 116–33. (Scotus explicitly rejects that a continuum could be composed either of extended atoms or of zero-magnitude points.)

[27] Henry of Ghent's later embarrassment at having been a party to the condemnation of article 219 is well known; I discuss it in "The Condemnations of 1277," 82.

> Aristotle in *Physics* VI . . . proves that no indivisible can move . . . because anything which moves is partly in the terminus *a quo*, and partly in the terminus *ad quem* . . . But an indivisible cannot be partly in the terminus *a quo* and partly in the terminus *ad quem*, because it does not have parts. Therefore [it cannot move].[28]

For the sake of argument, suppose that we can partition any motion into passages between overlapping spaces. In this case, part of the mobile will be in the starting position, and part in the final position. Second,

> Everything which moves traverses a space equal to it or smaller [than it] before [it traverses one] larger [than it]; but an indivisible cannot first traverse something smaller than it; therefore it traverses something equal to itself before [it traverses something] larger than itself. But in always traversing a space equal to itself it will traverse the whole continuum over which it moves. Therefore that will be composed of indivisibles equal to the moved indivisible. But the consequent is false; therefore too is the antecedent.[29]

The idea is that an indivisible cannot traverse something smaller than itself (since it lacks extension). But it must traverse something equal to itself before traversing something larger than itself: so the continuum that it traverses must be composed of indivisibles—against Scotus's Aristotelianism on the nature of a continuum.

Scotus's instinct in his reply is to maintain that the problem only arises in the case of the motion of an angel located at a physical point.[30] I am not sure whether he is right about this, given the spatial indivisibility of every angel, whatever its total volume. But in any case, he believes it to be false that an indivisible cannot move, and he offers replies to Aristotle's arguments on the assumption that the relevant indivisible is a non-extended point. Curiously, the difficulty occurs, in a different way, on Aquinas's account as well, though it is clearly the case that in Aquinas's account the issue arises only in the case of an angel operating at a spatial point. So, by way of contrast I begin with Aquinas's reply to the first of these objections,[31] and then turn to Scotus's very different one. In Aquinas's account, the place of an angel is (roughly) identified with the place of the angel's activity. Imagine an angel that acts merely at a single point

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[28] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.5 n. 302, Editio Vaticana 7:285; see Aristotle *Phys.* 6.4.234a10–20, 6.10.240b8–31.

[29] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.5 n. 303, Editio Vaticana 7:285; see Aristotle *Phys.* 6.10.241a6–14.

[30] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.5 n. 412, Editio Vaticana 7:338.

[31] See *Summa theologiae* 1a.53.1 arg. 1.

in space.[32] Aquinas maintains that the motion of such an angel would amount to its having different effects at different points in space, and the continuous motion of such an angel would amount to its having different effects at different continuous points in space. But on Aquinas's Aristotelian assumptions, there are no continuous points. So, the continuous motion of such an angel would be impossible: if it were to move, it would have to do so discontinuously, acting first at one point and then at a point discontinuous with the first one.[33] (The issue does not arise in the case of an angel operating at an extended place, because the operation of the angel is extended, and thus readily movable, in line with Aristotle's intuitions about the motion of extended bodies.)

Scotus disagrees with the claim that the motion of an indivisible requires continuous indivisible points in space, and he thus aims to give a general account of the continuous motion of an indivisible that is compatible with Aristotle's divisibilist account of space. If Scotus is right, his solution would be open to Aquinas too, since the only difference between the two positions is that Aquinas understands the motion of an angel to amount to the motion of its activity (as it were), whereas Scotus understands the motion of an angel to amount to the spatial re-location (as it were) of its substance. Scotus's response to Aristotle's argument is simply to clarify what being "partly" somewhere means. Rather than suppose that the relevant motion-principle requires that the *moved body* be partly somewhere, we could argue instead that it is sufficient for motion merely that successively different parts of the *place* contain the moving body. And this description can readily be satisfied by a moving indivisible.[34] In reply to the second objection, Scotus reasons similarly:

> A whole thing passes some determined and particular point in space in virtue of one of its parts (and to the extent that it passes the point, it passes something smaller than itself, speaking of a place other than its total starting place) before it passes an equal or larger place. But this is accidental, to the extent that the mobile can have a place smaller than its total place. If we talk of larger, smaller, and equal places according to which the continuity of motion is immediately applied, of which infinitely many succeed the first place, then simply speaking something passes something larger than itself before it traverses something equal to itself.[35]

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[32] See *Summa theologiae* 1a.52.2 co.
[33] *Summa theologiae* 1a.53.1 ad 1.
[34] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.5 n. 423, Editio Vaticana 7:342.
[35] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.5 nn. 424–25, Editio Vaticana 7:343.

The passage is not wholly clear. But Scotus is attempting to claim that Aristotle's principle—that "everything which moves traverses a space equal to it or smaller than it before it traverses one larger than it"—aims in fact to secure the claim that there is no smallest distance which a continuously moving item must first traverse. Aristotle's *ex professo* principle is satisfied in the case of an extended body (one that "can have a place smaller than its total place," and thus that can traverse a space smaller than itself before it traverses one larger than itself); but the claim which Aristotle was really aiming at is satisfied indifferently by both extended and unextended items.

This is not just *ad hoc* wordplay. Scotus believes there to be a principle here, one which Aristotle overlooked. The continuity of motion is sufficiently secured by the divisibility of the mobile. But, equally—and more obviously—it is sufficiently secured by the divisibility of the space. In the latter case, we can imagine a limit of a body passing through divisible space; in the former, we can imagine a point in space being passed over by a divisible body. Continuous motion—indeed, any motion whatsoever—is impossible only if both space and the mobile are indivisible.[36]

What about the Aristotelian concerns about resistance? The basic principle is that what prevents motion from being instantaneous is simply the limited power of the mover relative to what is moved (where the relativization can include the resistance of the medium, but is not restricted to it).[37] A self-moving angel is restricted in power and cannot move itself to a completely new place—one not overlapping with the first place—instantaneously[38] (if it is so moved instantaneously, this is so only because it is moved by an agent infinite in power—viz., God).[39]

2. *Angelic Time*

Medieval philosophers accept three kinds of durational metric: time, eviternity (or the *aevum*), and eternity.[40] The first and third are well known

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[36] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.5 n. 421, Editio Vaticana 7:341.

[37] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.5 nn. 428–29, Editio Vaticana 7:344–46.

[38] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.5 n. 430, Editio Vaticana 7:346.

[39] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.8 n. 518, Editio Vaticana 7:388.

[40] On the notion of the *aevum*, see also Pasquale Porro, *Forme e modelli di durata nel pensiero medievale: L'*aevum, *il tempo discreto, la categoria "quando,"* Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Series 1.16 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 51–164; Porro, "Angelic Measures: *Aevum* and Discrete Time," in *The Medieval Concept of Time: The Scholastic Debate and its Reception in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Pasquale Porro, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 75 (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill,

in modern discussions: time is the measure of physical processes, and eternity the measure of divine duration. Corresponding to these two metrics are two different topological structures: time should be understood as composed of extended periods or intervals; eternity should be understood as something unextended, like a point. The second durational metric, the *aevum*, is first found in the *Liber de causis*.[41] It was held by the medievals to be the measure of angelic duration. Just what the *aevum* is, and how it is measured, was a matter of considerable dispute, some of which I will discuss below. Furthermore, it was thought that in some respects, angels are subject to time as well, namely, insofar as they have their mental acts successively and insofar as they move in the physical world; so I will discuss theories of angelic temporality as well.

2.1. *The* aevum

Of particular importance was the dispute about the topological structure of eviternity: is it composed, like time, of extended periods or intervals, or is it, like eternity, something unextended or point-like? The answer to this question has certain further physical consequences: for if we think that eviternity is composed of extended periods, and we think it possible for there to be angels in the absence of any physical process, then accepting eviternity will entail accepting some kind of extended duration in the absence of any physical process—something akin to modern theories of absolute time. And this is not the only unexpected consequence of the medieval discussions of eviternity. For all sides in the dispute accept that continuous angelic motion is measured by some kind of continuous time-stream—though they differed as to whether this time-stream should be identified with the time-stream of the physical universe.

So, talk about the *aevum* sometimes turns out to be something rather different from talk merely about a durational measure. As I shall argue, one motivation for those thinkers who denied that eviternity should be construed along the lines of an extended period is that angels have all their parts "at once." To the extent that even material substances are distinct from processes, such substances too have all their parts at once. So, the case of eviternity turns out to be a paradigm for the ways in which

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2001), 131–265; and Rory Fox, *Time and Eternity in Mid-Thirteenth-Century Thought*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 255–73.

[41] *Liber de causis*, prop. 31 (ch. 30) nn. 211–12, ed. A. Pattin, *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 28 (1966): 90–203, at 199. On the origins of the notion of the *aevum*, see especially Porro, *Forme e modelli*, 51–93; and Porro, "Angelic Measures," 132–41.

substances persist over time. And in this case, the question turns out to be at least as much metaphysical as having to do with the "physics" of angelic existence. In a nutshell: I shall argue that those who propose the *aevum* to have the topological properties of a period are likely to construe the *aevum* in physical terms, as a kind of absolute time; those who hold that it has the topological properties of an instant are likely to construe it in metaphysical terms, as a way of talking about the persistence of non-process-like entities such as substances. Indeed, Scotus sees the *aevum* as the relevant durational measure of all created substances, not just angels, on the assumption that such substances have all their parts at once. If this hypothesis is correct, it follows that in many medieval debates about the *aevum*, the two sides were talking at cross purposes—something that I hope to bring out below.

According to a well-known Aristotelian account of time, time is relative to change: in the absence of change, there can be no time. "Time is the number of motion in respect of before and after."[42] Angels are paradigms of finitely enduring but possibly changeless substances. Angels do not grow, for example. (I will return to the question of possible angelic change below, and for now will proceed on the assumption that the relevant kind of angelic existence is one that involves no change in state: perhaps an angel with just one persisting cognitive act—the vision of God, for example.) The Aristotelian account of time suggests that there is some sense in which angels are timeless. Thus Aquinas:

> The *aevum* in itself lacks before and after.[43] . . . The *aevum* is all at once (*totum simul*).[44]

(Aquinas goes on to note that there is a sense in which the *aevum*—unlike eternity—can be "joined to before and after,"[45] since the operations of an angel can be temporal: I return to this in the next section.) The *aevum*, according to these quotations, has the topological structure not of a temporal period or interval but of a temporal instant. It is "all at once." Aquinas explicitly relates this to Aristotle's relativistic account of time:

> A temporal thing gets older in time from the fact that it has existence that is mutable: before and after in the measure is from the mutability of the measured thing, as is clear from *Physics* IV. If therefore an eviternal is not

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42 Aristotle *Phys.* 4.11.219b1–2.
43 *Summa theologiae* 1a.10.5 co.
44 *Summa theologiae* 1a.10.5 ad 2.
45 *Summa theologiae* 1a.10.5 co.

> such that it can get older or be renewed, this will be because its existence is immutable. Therefore its measure will not have before and after.[46]

On the face of it, the idea is that an angel is changeless: and if it is changeless, it cannot, on Aristotelian grounds, be subject to something with the topological structure of time. Indeed, in Aquinas's account, an angel is subject to something with the topological properties of an *instant*—a puzzling feature of Aquinas's account to which I return below. But I think there is more to it than this. In these passages, Aquinas makes it clear that the angel itself, or at least its existence, is "all at once": and this is a way of saying that an angel lacks temporal parts. It is not, in other words, a process, and Aquinas infers from this that it cannot be subject to time. But this inference is odd: that something lacks temporal parts does not mean that it cannot persist through time, but merely that it persists without being a process.

Something like this point is made by Aquinas's opponent, Bonaventure, if I understand him correctly.[47] Bonaventure holds that the *aevum* is extended, with "durational composition"[48] from durational "parts."[49] Equally, it includes "before and after," even though the item subject to it does not really change:

> We should posit before and after in the *aevum*, just as we should posit some succession—though a different succession from [that which we posit] in time. In time, there is succession with variation, and before and after with aging (*inveteratione*) and renewal (*innovatione*). In the *aevum* there is truly the before and after which implies the extension of duration, but which does not imply variation or renewal.[50]

This is clearly a view on the reality of time without change: it thus amounts to a rejection of Aristotle's relativistic theory in favor of a theory of absolute time, at least in the context of angelic duration. Bonaventure is as

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[46] Ibid.

[47] See also my "Four-Dimensionalism and Identity Across Time: Henry of Ghent vs. Bonaventure," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 37 (1999): 393–414, where I deal in detail with Henry of Ghent's arguments against Bonaventure. I am now less inclined to ascribe to Bonaventure the view that angels have temporal parts, something I argued in that article. It seems to me that Bonaventure's view is that an angel lacks temporal parts even though its duration has temporal parts, as I try to explain below.

[48] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.2.1.1.3 fund. 3, *Opera omnia* (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1882–1902) 2:62a.

[49] *In Sent*. 2.2.1.1.3 fund. 4, *Opera omnia* 2:62a.

[50] *In Sent.* 2.2.1.1.3 co., *Opera omnia* 2:62b.

explicit as Aquinas is that an angel lacks temporal parts. As Bonaventure puts it:

> Even if [an angel] has its whole being (*esse*), nevertheless it does not have at once the continuation of its being: and for this reason there is succession without novelty in being or in an absolute property, although there is real continuation there.[51]

So an angel has all its parts at once, even though it exists for a period. To make this metaphysical claim more explicit, Bonaventure contrasts the existence of an angel with that of a process, something that fails to have all its parts at once. The process here is the flowing of a river from its source; the contrasting non-process-like existence is the dependence of a sunbeam on the sun:

> A river flows from its source in such a way that new water, not the same, always appears. A ray shines out from the sun continuously, not because something new is always emitted, but because what is emitted is continued: whence the influence of the sun is nothing other than the continuation of what is [already] given. Likewise, in motion and the being of a mobile thing, some property already possessed is given up, and one not already possessed is acquired; but in the being of an eviternal thing, what is first given is continued by the continuous influence of God.[52]

The idea is that the flowing of a river is essentially a process—and presumably properly measured by time, as in the first quotation from Bonaventure above. (In fact, the discussion of the case of "motion and the being of a mobile thing" does not commit Bonaventure to the view that things subject to time have to be processes properly speaking; all that is required are *real* changes, that is, the loss and gain of forms.) The case of a sunbeam contrasts with this: Bonaventure supposes a sunbeam to be one unchanging item, existing in continuous dependence on the sun. In this case, the sunbeam has all its parts at once, even though it persists through time.

What is at stake between Aquinas and Bonaventure, then, has nothing to do with the metaphysics of persistence; on that question, they seem to be in agreement that there is a class of changeless things, each of which has all its parts at once. The debate has rather to do with the possibility of time in the absence of real change: something that Aquinas is, on Aristotelian grounds, not prepared to countenance. But Bonaventure believes—understandably—that someone adopting a view like Aquinas's will not be

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[51] *In Sent*. 2.2.1.1.3 co., *Opera omnia* 2:62b–63a.
[52] *In Sent*. 2.2.1.1.3 co., *Opera omnia* 2:62b.

able to give an account of the apparently temporal features of an angel's existence, even in the absence of angelic change. For example,

> If the whole existence of an eviternal is simultaneous, and [its] whole duration lacks before and after, then there cannot be longer or shorter [periods of existence]. In this case it follows that the soul of Peter is in glory neither before, nor for a longer period (*diutius*) than, the soul of blessed Francis [of Assisi]. But this is clearly false. Therefore [the whole existence of an eviternal is not simultaneous, lacking before and after].[53]

Bonaventure's way of talking here is not quite right. As we have seen, he himself holds that the existence of an eviternal is simultaneous, all at once; the difference is rather that, for him, this being is somehow "continued" through time. But the point is clear enough. Aquinas and those who oppose the extensionalist account of the *aevum* are committed to the view that the *aevum* has the topological properties of an instant. Instants lack extension and obviously, thus, cannot be different in extent. A further argument makes the related point that, if angelic duration is temporally instantaneous, there can be no distinction between past and future in the existence of an angel:

> If the whole existence [of an eviternal] is present, *being* and *having been* are not different. Therefore, whatever does not now exist, never existed; and whatever existed, now exists. But God cannot make what existed not to have been. Therefore he cannot destroy an eviternal. But this is clearly false. Therefore [the whole existence of an eviternal is not present].[54]

Bonaventure again does not express himself quite correctly, since his view is that the whole existence of an eviternal is present—all at once—and that it is the eviternal's *duration* that is not all at once. But the idea is that if the duration of an eviternal were all at once, then there would be no distinction of past and present in the existence of the eviternal. The past is necessary in the sense that it is now causally unaffectable. God cannot bring it about that an angel that existed in the past did not do so. But if the present existence of an eviternal is the same as its past existence, God's inability to affect the past entails his inability to affect the present too. Since God can causally affect an eviternal (for example, by destroying it), the duration of an eviternal cannot be all at once.

Since both the past and the present are necessary, Bonaventure should have phrased his argument to involve talk about the future, not the present: if the duration of an angel is not extended, it follows that the future

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[53] *In Sent.* 2.2.1.1.3 fund. 8, *Opera omnia* 2:62a.
[54] *In Sent.* 2.2.1.1.3 fund. 7, *Opera omnia* 2:62a.

existence of an eviternal is as necessary as its present existence. In a further argument, Bonaventure makes this modification, but does so in a way that mistakenly suggests that the past existence of an angel is logically necessary ("it is impossible to think that it was not").[55] Aquinas, in objecting to his own position, combines Bonaventure's two arguments in a way that makes Bonaventure's point correctly:

> If there is no before and after in the *aevum*, it follows that *being, having been*, and *going to be*, do not differ in eviternals. Therefore since it is impossible for an eviternal not to have been, it follows that it is impossible for it not to be going to be. But this is false, because God can reduce it to nothing.[56]

Aquinas fails, however, to find a satisfactory reply on his own behalf:

> There is no difference of past and future in the existence of an angel considered in itself . . . When we say that an angel is, or was, or will be, these differ according to our intellect's understanding, which takes the existence of an angel in comparison to different parts of time. And when we say that an angel is or was, we suppose something whose opposite is not subject to divine power; when we say that it will be, we do not yet suppose anything [whose opposite is not subject to divine power]. Whence, since the being and non-being of an angel are subject to divine power, considering things absolutely, God can bring it about that the being of an angel is not future. But he cannot bring it about that it is not while it is, or that it was not after it is.[57]

The problem here is that Aquinas wants to claim that an angel has a relationship to divine power that is temporally indexed, without it being the case that the angel is itself temporal. And this seems to be a flat contradiction.

What gets Aquinas into this mess is his commitment both to Aristotelian relativism and to the possibility of a completely immutable angel. Given his Aristotelianism, he is convinced that the position of the extensionalists is incoherent:

> This position [i.e., Bonaventure's] implies contradictories, which is clear if renewal and aging refer to the measure itself. For since the before and after of duration cannot be simultaneous, if the *aevum* has before and after, it is necessary that the later [part] comes to be newly present when the earlier

[55] *In Sent.* 2.2.1.1.3 fund. 6, *Opera omnia* 2:62a.
[56] *Summa theologiae* 1a.10.5 arg. 3.
[57] *Summa theologiae* 1a.10.5 ad 3.

> part recedes, and thus there will be innovation in the *aevum* itself just as there is in time.[58]

It is trivially true that any sort of temporality—amassing more years—is a change, and thus trivially true that anything temporal changes. But, Bonaventure would respond, this kind of change is purely extrinsic: it does not involve (for example) the real exchange of forms. The relevant change is simply in the angel's dependence on God, and Bonaventure denies that this kind of merely relational change involves any exchange of form. The relation of an angel to God is not some kind of real form—say, some kind of inherent relational accident. Rather, it is essential to the creature and, in some sense, not really distinct from the creature's essence.[59]

Clearly, this position raises as many questions as it answers. Henry of Ghent worries that the identity of the relevant relations with the creature's essence, coupled with the view that the dependence relations are in a state of flux, would entail that the creature's essence is in a constant state of flux:

> Since the essence or existence of thing . . . is simple and indivisible, its becoming cannot be continuous or divisible.[60]

And if the essence of a thing is in a constant state of flux, there would be no identity across time:

> If the existence of a thing is a continuous successive process (*fieri*), this cannot be understood unless both the thing itself and the nature subject to existence either always remain the same, or are always different. If the latter, then nothing would be numerically identical in two moments, and the opinion of those who say that, on account of the change of things, nothing remains the same (such that we cannot pick the same thing twice over, since the thing picked out the second time is not the same as it was before) would be true. Aristotle argued against this opinion, and disproved it in Metaphysics IV.[61]

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[58] *Summa theologiae* 1a.10.5 co.

[59] See Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.1.1.1.2 co., *Opera omnia* 2:34b–35a.

[60] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.11, ed. Badius (Paris, 1518), 169rH. For a detailed discussion of Henry's position, see my "Four-Dimensionalism," 400–14. See also Pasquale Porro, "Tempo e *aevum* in Enrico di Gand e Giovanni Duns Scoto," in *Tempus, Aevum, Aeternitas: La concettualizzazione del tempo nel pensiero tardomedievale*, ed. Guido Alliney and Luciano Cova (Florence: Olschki, 2000), 89–129, at 105–16.

[61] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.11, ed. Badius, 168vE, referring to Aristotle's refutation of Heraclitus at *Metaph.* 4.4.1006a30–b18.

The most sophisticated extensionalist response to this sort of objection can be found in Peter of John Olivi.[62] The problem is that the notion of merely durational change looks incoherent; Olivi attempts to give an account of what such change would amount to, building on Bonaventure's insight that something can be "continued" without there being any real change in it. By so doing, as he is well aware, Olivi manages to put the notion of absolute time on a far firmer metaphysical footing than Bonaventure was able to achieve. Basically, Olivi gives an account of Bonaventure's notion of the continuation of a substance by appealing to the thought that the substance is *repeated* in every temporal instant:

> The notion of duration in the case of one thing enduring without variation means the persistence (*permansionem*) of the same thing, and this is the same as saying the repetition (*iterationem*) or continuation of the same existence (*esse*). Continuation and repetition however necessarily include some diversity, for although the thing that is repeated remains the same, the reiteration itself is different, and the continuation has various parts from which it is composed—even though the existence which endures and persists is always the same.[63]

The term "continuation" here clearly alludes to Bonaventure, and I take it that Olivi's claims here represent a conscious attempt to give an exposition of Bonaventure's position. But the repetition claim is new in Olivi, and it represents a significant attempt to give a philosophically satisfactory account of the persistence of eviternals, and presumably of any object that lacks temporal parts. The idea is that numerically one and the same object is repeated in any instant at which it exists, such that the whole object exists at each instant—there are no parts that it lacks at any instant at which it exists.

So, in this view, an object endures by being continuously repeated. To this extent, an eviternal is analogous to a universal, as such universals are understood in versions of strong metaphysical realism. According to such theories, a universal is numerically one object really repeated in each of its instances. Medieval theologians generally agree that there is at least one such object: the divine essence, numerically one abstract object really

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[62] For a detailed discussion of Olivi's view, see my "Absolute Time: Peter John Olivi and the Bonaventurean Tradition," *Medioevo* 27 (2002): 261–300.

[63] Peter of John Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 9, ed. Bernhard Jansen, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 4 (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1922), 1:174.

repeated in each divine person. On the theory of persistence developed by Olivi, an eviternal is numerically one concrete object really repeated in each instant that it exists. Take some concrete object x that is repeated in this way. It is true of x-at-t_1 that it is identical with x, and true of x-at-t_2 that it is identical with x. As Olivi observes, this theory of persistence can—as I just noted—be understood in terms of an analogy to a universal such as the divine nature:

> The most beautiful image of the personal production existing in God lies in the fact that these *rationes* [viz., the repetitions of one and the same individual] pertain both to becoming and to existing, such that there can be said in some way to be many becomings and many existings, or many makings and existences, without diversity of essence, just as in its way there are [in God] many productions and existences with the maximal identity of essence; and just as there in a certain way production is the basis of the plurification of existence, rather than *vice versa*, so it is in the case at hand.[64]

Just as God the Father is identical with God, so too is God the Son. But the analogy is not exact: x-at-t_1 is identical with x-at-t_2; but God the Father and God the Son are not supposed to be thus identical.

Olivi's theory suggests a novel response to the Aristotle-inspired objection to extensionalist accounts of the *aevum*, namely, that the notion of the *aevum* is contradictory, both requiring change ("before and after") and denying it ("without innovation"):

> This continuation does not appear to add to existence taken absolutely anything other than the notion of before and after: for the existence, already received, is continued by itself as already received . . . The addition or repetition of the same thing to itself—which is more properly called "continuation"—does not imply in itself the acquisition of anything other than itself, but only the acquisition of itself, so to speak, with the feature of before and after. For the production of duration does not imply the impression of any accident in the thing that endures, or the eduction of any [form] from it, but rather [it implies that] a continuum, or something consequent on it, is made of the enduring thing.[65]

Olivi agrees with defenders of the instant theory that the interval theory of the *aevum* entails some minimal sort of change—variation—but he denies that this change involves the real exchange of forms and, therefore, motion in an Aristotelian sense. All that happens is that one and the same

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[64] Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 9, 1:186.
[65] Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 9, 1:177.

thing is repeated. And time is constituted by this repetition, without any real change.[66]

One problem remains unresolved in Olivi's account. Olivi agrees with the Aristotelians that no continuum can be composed of indivisibles.[67] But his view—that an eviternal exists completely at every instant of its existence—seems to imply that its existence is composed of instants: we can count the repetitions of the substance, just as we can count persons of the Trinity. Olivi replies that it is false to suppose that the eviternal exists at *every* instant of its existence; indeed, it is false to suppose even that the eviternal exists at *any* instant of its existence, since existing at an instant is incompatible with being in any sort of motion, spatial or temporal:

> So it should be said that something's existing in a divisible part of a duration is not through different parts of the thing, but only through a certain continuous transit. It would be well argued if the thing were posited to exist in some one instant; here however it is not posited that the thing thus exists, but rather that in time it exists at the same time, for in transit it exists in transit, and not resting or remaining still.[68]

In effect, Olivi wants to say that the object is repeated over and over again, but that, for any repetition of the object, there is no time at which it exists. An eviternal exists for periods only, where such periods are composed (if at all) not of instants but of further periods—and any such period is temporally larger in extent than the eviternal, since the eviternal itself (unlike the periods it occupies) is *totum simul*—of no temporal extent at all, lacking temporal parts. Nevertheless, talk of repetition at an instant entails definite, non-vague, particular instants, and thus (contrary to Olivi's Aristotelian assumptions here) that a duration is composed of such instants. To this extent, Olivi's view looks incoherent.

Non-extensionalist accounts of the *aevum* do not seem to have any theoretical function; indeed, they do not seem to do any philosophical work at all. This can be seen very nicely if we look at Scotus's account, since Scotus seems fully aware of the fact and uses the language of the *aevum* as a way of talking about the way in which a substance persists.[69]

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[66] Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 9, 1:180.

[67] Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 9, 1:161: "Indivisibile etiam indivisibili succedere non potest, quia simplex simplici additum facit maius."

[68] Olivi, *Quaestiones in II Sent.* 9, 1:180–81.

[69] For rather different analyses of the matter, see Porro, *Forme e modelli,* 251–56; Porro, "Tempo e *aevum*," 117–27; and Olivier Boulnois, "Du temps cosmique à la durée ontologique? Duns Scot, le temps, l'*aevum* et l'éternité," in *The Medieval Concept of Time*, ed. Porro, 161–88.

Scotus rejects extensionalist accounts of the *aevum* on the grounds that they seem to posit some kind of temporal succession without any corresponding real change—i.e., some sort of absolute time.[70] (I show in the next section that he makes use of some counterfactual relation to motion to explain the passage of time in the absence of any relevant physical process.) For Scotus, talk of the *aevum* is just a way of talking about the fact that substances have all their parts at once—they lack temporal parts—and Scotus simply identifies an *aevum* with the *existence* of a substance. Since the existence is "all at once," so too is the *aevum*:[71] the existence and the *aevum* both (as we say) *endure*: "persist by being wholly present at more than one time."[72] But the *aevum* is supposed to be a measure, and since all substances are equally such that they have all their parts at once, Scotus suggests that the informational aspect of the measuring relationship is provided by relations that each substance has to the one immediately more perfect than it is, such that the most perfect created substance has no measure of enduring, and the least perfect measures no substance.[73] I take it that the idea is that the most perfect substance instantiates most evidently the property of enduring. The Scotist claims here have *nothing* to do with temporal topology or metric, and when he talks (as he does) of a "durational measure," all he means is to highlight the fact that substances persist by enduring.[74] (Indeed, all created substances and non-process-like accidents persist by enduring—i.e., are measured by the *aevum*: the category for Scotus is not proper to angelic existence, for the simple and good reason that things other than angels persist by enduring.)[75]

Given the fact that the Scotist discussion of the *aevum* is wholly focused on metaphysics and has nothing to do with questions of time as such, it is perhaps no surprise to find Ockham simply claiming that angelic duration is measured by time:

> Time is the measure of the duration of angels, just as it is the measure of motion. This is proved, because whatever has greater or lesser duration only because it coexists with greater or lesser succession or time, whether

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[70] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.1 nn. 58–60, Editio Vaticana 7:182–33.

[71] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.1 n. 60, Editio Vaticana 7:183; *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.2 nn. 122–23, Editio Vaticana 7:210–11.

[72] David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 202.

[73] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.3 nn. 130–35, Editio Vaticana 7:212–15.

[74] He makes the point very elegantly at *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.3 n. 132, Editio Vaticana 7:213–14.

[75] See, e.g., Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.4 n. 180, Editio Vaticana 7:235.

> actually or potentially, is measured by time. But the duration of an angel is like this. Therefore [time is the measure of the duration of angels][76] . . . Speaking of the measure of duration, I say that angels are measured by time and not by the *aevum*, because the *aevum* is nothing.[77]

As should become clear in the next section, this position, a claim about the physics of angelic *time*, not the metaphysics of angelic *persistence*, actually owes a great deal to Scotus's account of the temporal measure of angelic activity—despite surface terminological dissimilarities.

2.2. *Continuous Time*

The *aevum* is a measure of the duration of unchanging substances, or—as the medievals seemed to think of it—of substances underlying only accidental changes. There are various ways in which angels can undergo accidental changes: changes in place, for example, and changes in cognitive and appetitive state. Some of these changes—particularly certain changes in place—are continuous, not instantaneous, and these changes are measured by time. Even an extensionalist on the question of the *aevum* as committed as Bonaventure makes a distinction here. His comments on the *aevum* concern something with a temporal *topology* even in the absence of metrical considerations. But he seems to think that angelic motion has a temporal metric as well as a topology. Bonaventure claims that an angel cannot be in more than one place at a time, and in replying to an argument to the effect that an angel can be in more than one place at a time on the grounds (ascribed by Bonaventure to Augustine) that "where an angel wants to be, there it is,"[78] Bonaventure claims that the Augustinian aphorism should be interpreted to mean that an angel's

> being in the place that it wills follows the act of willing without any great temporal delay, on account of the angel's speed . . . It does not wish to be there in an instant, but in that time in which it knows itself to be able to arrive.[79]

I take it that talk of speed here entails a temporal metric.

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[76] William of Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.11, ed. Gedeon Gál and Rega Wood (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1981), *Opera theologica* 5:234.

[77] Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.11, *Opera theologica* 5:236.

[78] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.2.2.2.2 arg. 1, *Opera omnia* 2:78a.

[79] *In Sent.* 2.2.2.2.2 ad 1, *Opera omnia* 2:79b.

Aquinas too holds that continuous angelic motion is measured by continuous time. But he adds the important clarification that angelic time is a temporal stream distinct from the time-stream of material objects:

> The motion of an angel is temporal, and in continuous time if its motion is continuous . . . But this . . . continuous time . . . is not the same as the time which measures the motion of the heaven, and by which all bodies that have mutability from the motion of the heaven are measured, because the motion of an angel does not depend on the motion of the heaven.[80]

It is easy enough to see what drives Aquinas's claim that angelic and material time-streams are different: angels can move irrespective of the motion of the material world, so their time-stream must be independent of the time-stream that measures the motion of the material world. But this view seems to raise a problem. Angels are supposed to be able to interact causally with the material world; indeed, for Aquinas, the notion of such causal interaction lies at the heart of the whole account of angelic location, as we saw above. But as far as I can see, the notion of separate time-streams makes sense only on the assumption that such causal interaction is impossible.

This is sorted out beautifully in Scotus, making use of the notion of a time "common" to angels and material beings, found in the earlier Franciscan tradition (see, e.g., the discussion of Pecham below). Common time does not require the motion of the heavenly sphere; any motion whatsoever is sufficient. Against Aquinas's defense of distinct time-streams, Scotus first appeals to parsimony,[81] and then raises and replies to the following possible Thomist objection:

> If you object that [an angel] can move even if the heaven is at rest, and that therefore it is not necessary for its motion to be in [common] time, I reply: even if the heaven is at rest, [the apostle] Peter will be able to walk around after the resurrection, and this walking is not thought to be in any time other than our common continuous time, even though the motion of the heaven does not exist. For the resting of the heaven is measured potentially . . . by the time by which the first motion—if it existed—would be positively and actually measured.[82]

[80] *Summa theologiae* 1a.53.3 co.
[81] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.7 n. 501, Editio Vaticana 7:380.
[82] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.7 nn. 502–3, Editio Vaticana 7:380–81.

For Scotus, the actual temporal measure for any motion other than the rotation of the outermost heavenly sphere is simply this latter motion. In the absence of this motion, temporal metric is established counterfactually, by what would have been the motion of the sphere if the motion were actual. In fact, Scotus's position is more adventurous even than this. Elsewhere, he denies that any actual motion is necessary for time, and he claims instead that the mere *possibility* of (continuous) motion is sufficient for the existence of common time:

> Just as a vacuum, if it existed, would be measured by the same magnitude as that by which a non-vacuum is measured, . . . so in the case at hand the privation of succession in the parts of a form is as great as is the succession through motion in the same form; for this measure is of rest (not positively but privatively) through the motion which could be in [the form] when the privation is in it.[83]

This seems to push Scotus somewhat in the direction of absolute time. But it is important to be careful here. The possibility Scotus is talking about is not *logical* but is relativized to the natures of the substances that exist. If God makes material bodies capable of motion, then even in the absence of actual motion—even when every such body is at *rest*—there is time. But if God makes merely material things incapable of motion, then there is no time. (Such beings would not count, according to Scotus, as being *at rest*: "rest" is a technical term for the inactivity of something naturally capable of activity.) Equally, if God makes angels capable of—say—continuous intellectual deliberation, then there is time, even if no angel exercises that capacity. But if God merely makes angels that are by nature incapable of continuous intellectual deliberation or any other change—perhaps intellectually static or changeless angels—then there is no time.[84] So, Scotus rejects the existence of absolute time. Still, given that Scotus accepts that God has in fact made spiritual substances by nature capable of some sort of continuous change, it follows that there is time throughout the existence of such substances: not, as Scotus notes, measuring the duration of the substances themselves, but measuring their motion and rest.[85]

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[83] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.4 n. 178, Editio Vaticana 7:234.
[84] I discuss all of this in detail in my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 232–37.
[85] On this, see Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.1.4 nn. 179–80, Editio Vaticana 7:235.

2.3. *Discrete Time*

As I showed above, at least some of the thinkers I examine here held that it is possible for angels to move from one place to another without going through any sort of process: without, for example, moving continuously from one place to the other. And they all held that it makes sense to speak of an angel's remaining sinless for just the first instant of the angel's existence. These issues all get treated as cases of limit-decision problems, and in this section I examine the different sorts of accounts that we can find.

One solution is to posit some sort of discrete time: time composed of (contiguous) indivisible instants.[86] This solution appeals to thinkers whose basic model of the *aevum* is indivisibilist: discrete time might be thought of as a succession of such indivisibles. The nature of the issue is made clear in Aquinas's account of the way in which an angel might move from one place to another without going through any intervening places. Although he does not put the matter in this way, Aquinas wants to think of this motion as a kind of instantaneous change: at one instant, the angel is in one place, and at the next instant the angel is in another place. This is—as I will show—an unusual account of instantaneous change, since it seems to posit immediate indivisibles in a way strictly disallowed in Aristotelian physics. As Aquinas's opponents see the matter, we should think of the angel's motion in the following way: there is a first instant at which the angel comes to occupy the new place, but no last instant at which the angel occupies the former place. Now, Aquinas rejects this as a basic model, since it requires that the duration of the angel's existence at (at least) the first place is (temporally) extended, and Aquinas, given his strong relativizing of time to motion, cannot see how this can be, since by definition the angel while at the first place is not in motion:

> It belongs to the essence of rest that what is at rest does not exist in different ways before and after. For this reason, what is at rest is, at any instant of time measuring the rest, in the same place in the first instant, in an intermediate instant, and in the last one. But it belongs to the definition of motion that what is in motion exists in different ways before and after. For this reason, in each temporal instant measuring the motion, what is moved exists under successively different dispositions; so it is necessary that, in the last instant, it has some form which it did not have previously.[87]

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[86] On discrete time, see Porro, *Forme e modelli*, 267–382; and Fox, *Time and Eternity*, 273–78.

[87] *Summa theologiae* 1a.53.3 co.

Aquinas takes this to entail that there cannot be first and last instants of periods of rest other than in cases in which the rest immediately precedes (or follows) a period of motion:

> Thus it is clear that to remain in a certain form—for example, whiteness—for a temporal period, is to be in that form in every instant of the period. Whence it is not possible that something remains under one form for the whole preceding period, and then in the last instant of that period exists under another form.[88]

Although Aquinas does not make the point explicitly, the same would hold, *mutatis mutandis*, if it were to be maintained that the subject ceases to instantiate the old form at the first instant of a second temporal period. What Aquinas is trying to avoid is positing two immediately adjacent instants in continuous time—something that he (presumably) takes to be prohibited by Aristotelian physics. This explains why he does not consider the case in which the subject ceases to instantiate the old form at the last instant of one temporal period, and begin to instantiate the new form at the first instant of a second period. Instants form the boundaries of periods of rest only if those periods are surrounded by processes:

> This is possible in motion, because being in motion for a whole period of time means not being in the same disposition in any instant of that time. Therefore all these sorts of instantaneous mutations are the end terms of continuous motion: for example, the generation [of a substance] is the end term of the alteration of matter, and illumination the end term of the local motion of the illuminating body.[89]

In this example, even cases of apparently instantaneous changes are, in fact, cases in which a form follows a period of motion. In such cases there is no problem coming up with a limit-decision procedure: there can be first and last instants of periods of rest, but not of motion.

Given all this, Aquinas posits instead that each period of rest, in cases of instantaneous motion, must have its own indivisible time. The discrete indivisible periods together constitute discrete time, composed of contiguous indivisible periods:

> The time of an angel's motion can be discontinuous. And in this way an angel can be in one place in one instant, and in another place in another instant, with no intervening period existing.[90]

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[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] *Summa theologiae* 1a.53.3 ad 3.

Aquinas gives the same account of angelic sinfulness:

> Immediately after the first instant of its creation, the Devil sinned[91] . . . To the extent that time is continuous, it is true that between any two instants there is an intervening period, as is proved in *Physics* VI [ch.1, 231a29–b10]. But in the angels, who are not subject to the motion of the heaven (which is primarily measured by continuous time), time is understood to be the succession of intellectual or affective operations. Therefore in this way the first instant in the angels is understood to correspond to the operation of the angelic mind by which it turns to itself . . . And this operation was good in all of them. But from this operation, some were turned . . . to praise of the Word; and others, remaining in themselves, were made to be night.[92]

Of course, as thus presented, the position looks arbitrary. Arguments against immediate indivisibles seem as effective against Aquinas's position as they are against a view which would posit that time in general is composed of immediate indivisibles, and some of Aquinas's opponents, understandably, made just this objection. Rory Fox quotes the following apposite passage from John Pecham:

> Between any two instants there is an intervening period, and an instant is neither continuous with nor contiguous to an instant . . . They say that there is a time that is continuous, and the measure of what is continuous, and another time that is discrete and composed of instants, which measures the instantaneous operations of an angel, and that it is not true of this [latter time that between any two instants there is an intervening period]. But against this: let us accept one instant of discrete time in which [the angel] was good—let it be labeled *a*—and another instant in which it was bad—let it be labeled *b*. Instant *a* is simultaneous with some instant of continuous time . . .—let it be *c*; and similarly *b* is simultaneous with another instant of that common time—let it be *d*. Therefore, either *c* and *d* are one instant, or two. If they are one, then the angel was good and bad in the same instant. If they are two, there was some part of time in which or with which the angel was neither good nor bad, since between any two instants of [common] time there is an intervening period.[93]

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[91] *Summa theologiae* 1a.63.6 co.

[92] *Summa theologiae* 1a.63.6 ad 4.

[93] John Pecham, *Quodl.* 2.10, in *Fr. Ioannis Pecham Quodlibeta quatuor*, ed. F. Delorme, rev. Girard J. Etzkorn, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 25 (Grottaferrata, Rome: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1989), 99, quoted in Fox, *Time and Eternity*, 277. I use my own translation, not that provided by Fox.

As Fox comments,

> By way of a response to Aquinas all that they [viz., his opponents] felt that they needed to do was to reiterate Aristotle's original argument for the continuity of time and explicitly apply it to the case of angelic time . . . It is difficult to see how Aquinas might respond to this [viz., Pecham's] argument, especially when we bear in mind that there was a significant range of instances in which he actually wanted to allow for aeviternal beings interacting in a continuous process . . . So, as Pecham postulated, it would be possible to establish a 1:1 relationship between the instants of continuous time . . . and the instants of angelic time.[94]

Aquinas's discrete time seems to involve immediate indivisibles. Henry of Ghent proposes a different account, according to which there are periods between the time atoms:

> The time that measures these sudden angelic mutations is a discrete quantity . . . But its parts are like simple unities, and have no permanence, existing only in passing (*in transitu*), and the single parts co-exist with single instants of our time. Neither do they have continuity between themselves, because between any two instants or mutations there must be some angelic period in the instant in which the preceding mutation is terminated, in which the angel does not move, but as it were rests through some period and part of our time.[95]

This avoids the problem Pecham identified in Aquinas's position. Indeed, despite Henry's language this angelic time seems to be simply an account of extended time, with time atoms at the boundaries of temporal intervals. And, as Scotus notes, there seems to be no reason to posit that this is a time-stream distinct from the time-stream of material beings:

> Plurality should not be posited without necessity, and there is no necessity why there should be posited a discrete time measuring the motion of an angel, because whatever is preserved by that discrete time is also preserved by common continuous time. For just as it is necessary for them to say that, if [an angel] moves in an instant it cannot immediately have another instantaneous motion, so it can be posited—in the case that it moves instantaneously in an instant of common time—that although it can immediately have, after that instant, continuous motion in a period, it nevertheless cannot have an immediate instantaneous motion. Therefore it is not inappropriate to posit that an angel, to the extent that it participates in corporeal condition (that is, what can be in some sense of the same kind in [the angel] and in a body), also participates in some way in the measure of a body. But

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[94] Fox, *Time and Eternity*, 276, 277–78.
[95] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 13.7, *Opera omnia* 18:44–45.

> to the extent that it moves locally, it participates in "where" (which is a corporeal passion, in some sense of the same kind in an angel and in a body); therefore it can be measured by the measure of the first moved body.[96]

Scotus's argument here is that there cannot be two immediately contiguous instantaneous angelic movements—just as Henry supposes. But in that case, it looks as though every angelic motion must either be successive or be the boundary of periods of rest. This gives the time that measures angelic motion the topological structure of the time that measures corporeal changes. But, Scotus reasons, to the extent that angels share the properties of bodies, it makes sense to suppose that the time-stream that measures their motion is the same as the time-stream that measures the bodily motion. But (limited) location is a bodily property that angels seem to have too in some sense. So, why not just suppose that there is simply one time-stream here? The argument is less elegant than Pecham's argument against Aquinas, since Scotus could have appealed to the causal relations between angels and bodies to defend the view that angels and bodies share the same time-stream. But the point is clear enough. One further comment: I do not think that the claim that there are analogies between angelic and bodily location allows us to conclude that Scotus's view that angels and bodies share the same time-stream relies on his rather "corporeal" understanding of angelic location. Even Aquinas, after all, will allow talk of "contact" in both cases. But I do not know a way of showing this.

One reason why Aquinas posited discrete time is that he did not think it possible that two immediately contiguous periods of rest could correspond to two periods in continuous time. This is because, as I argued above, he does not see any principled way of devising a limit-decision procedure. There is no more reason to make the boundary intrinsic to one period than to make it intrinsic to the other. Scotus disagrees: in cases of two immediately contiguous periods of rest, the instants assigned to the boundaries of periods of rest should be located at the *beginning* of each period (presumably because, as I have suggested elsewhere, it is not possible to identify the instant of the change as belonging to the second state of rest until *after* the end of the first period of rest).[97] Scotus suggests a thought experiment against Aquinas's claim that the illumination of a body by (say) the sun must be the end result of motion (in this case, the

[96] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.7 n. 501, Editio Vaticana 7:380.
[97] On this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 224.

motion of the sun): imagine pre-existing darkness, and "the sun newly created."[98] In this case, a period of constant darkness is immediately succeeded by a period of constant light, and it is so without there being any sunrise.

The claim that there are, in cases like this, first instants of rest but no last instants of rest would perhaps enable Scotus to provide an alternative account to Aquinas's of the instantaneous nature of a fallen angel's sinlessness prior to his fall, one that avoids discrete time. At the first instant—the boundary—of its existence, t_0, an angel is sinless; at t_{+n} an angel is sinful, howsoever close to t_0 t_{+n} is.[99] This view does not entail that there is an instant in which the angel is both sinless and sinful—something akin to the line that Henry of Ghent took on the question of the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a view sometimes known as "quasi-Aristotelianism."[100] But, in fact, Scotus does not use this possible rejoinder to Aquinas's claims about discrete time in this context, because he (understandably) believes, in any case, that the initial conscious choices of the good and bad angels required time—a temporal period:

> [Objection:] Surely this period in itself was instantaneous or indivisible? [Reply:] It seems not . . . because the bad angels sinned through many sins, different in species, and they did not have all those acts simultaneously; therefore they had one after another, and thus they lacked the beatific vision for the whole period in which they had those acts.[101]

Conclusion

One of the most remarkable features of the medieval accounts of angelic time and motion is the extent to which they were increasingly used as a springboard for discussions of general topics in metaphysics and natural philosophy. Central are the questions on atomism and continuity raised both by angelic time and by angelic motion. The issue of angelic time leads to the discussion of the possibility of multiple time-streams, and to extended reflections on what it is for a substance to persist. To us, perhaps,

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[98] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.2.2.7 n. 494, Editio Vaticana 7:377.

[99] Scotus discusses this possibility in relation to the Blessed Virgin Mary at *Ordinatio* 3.3.1 nn. 30–31, Editio Vaticana 9:180–81.

[100] See Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 15.13, ed. Badius, 586r–vD. For a discussion, see Simo Knuuttila and Anja Inkeri Lehtinen, "Change and Contrariety: A Fourteenth Century Controversy," *Synthese* 40 (1979): 189–207.

[101] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.4–5.1–2 n. 45, Editio Vaticana 8:20.

the topic of the angels has a certain mystery or obscurity. I suspect that for medieval theologians the opposite is the case: angels are a simpler and easier case than corporeal substances precisely because they lack *matter*. This makes them very tempting as a *locus* for the discussion of both metaphysical and mathematical problems, some of which I have tried to highlight here. The discussions also reveal some of the theoretical pressures that can be brought to bear on Aristotelian accounts of time and motion in the light of theological concerns that do not feature in Aristotle: in particular, the possibility of an indivisible's moving, and (more strikingly) the possibility of absolute time (Bonaventure and Olivi) and of counterfactual accounts of relativistic time (Scotus).

ANGELIC KNOWLEDGE IN AQUINAS AND BONAVENTURE

Harm Goris

As purely spiritual beings, angels only have intellectual activity. According to the Scholastics, angels are not composed of bodily parts, do not have bodily organs, and, therefore, can only perform acts that do not require corporeal functions. Such are the acts of intellectual knowledge and intellectual will.[1]

This chapter attempts, first, to present a general survey of the views of Bonaventure (ca. 1217–1274) and of Thomas Aquinas (1224/1225–1274) on the knowledge of angels. The focus will be on Aquinas because his treatment of the subject is much more extensive, detailed, and systematic than Bonaventure's and has been more influential. For the most part, Bonaventure's position is very similar to the one Aquinas takes, but there are some interesting differences that can help to highlight the systematic problems involved in speculating on angelic knowledge. This relates to the second, more specific, aim of my paper, which is to explore systematically two issues that have particular philosophical and theological importance: the specifically human character of our intellectual knowledge; and the distinction between God the Creator and the non-divine, that is, creatures.

Aquinas and Bonaventure are both engaged in the larger project of synthesizing the classical Augustinian epistemology of divine illumination with the Aristotelian account of (human) knowledge through abstraction, which the medievals had newly rediscovered through Arab scholars. Characteristic of the Aristotelian approach is that, unlike Augustine's theory, it intends to explain the phenomenon of knowledge not in terms of the external influence of God and the receptivity of the knowing subject but by referring to the inner nature, the natural powers, and the activity of the knower herself.

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[1] See, for instance, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.5 co.

When explaining the knowledge that angels have, Aquinas and Bonaventure cannot just repeat Aristotle's theory of knowledge. While Aristotle had only dealt with the embodied intellect of human knowers, the Scholastics must incorporate a new perspective on knowledge in terms of purely spiritual, created knowing subjects. As the lowest of intellectual beings, humans acquire knowledge through their bodily senses. Their knowledge is receptive and causally dependent upon material objects. Angels, in contrast, lack a body and bodily senses. What, then, can be said about how and what they know? Also, Bonaventure and Aquinas are faced with another complicating factor, unknown to Aristotle: the angels are not divine; they are creatures. This means that any theory about angelic knowledge must clarify the sense in which it is creaturely, non-divine knowledge. In short, Aquinas and Bonaventure have to navigate between the Scylla of humanizing angelic knowledge and the Charybdis of deifying it. The need to find the right course encourages them, first, to explicate philosophically which aspects of human intellectual knowledge are uniquely human and do not belong to intellectual knowledge *per se*, and, second, to elaborate theologically on the distinction between created and divine modes of knowing. I shall argue that Aquinas succeeded better than Bonaventure on both accounts, though occasionally I shall also suggest that Aquinas's arguments should be given their most charitable reading.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part will consider the relationship between the angels' being and nature on the one hand, and their cognitive activity on the other hand. Next, we shall examine the cognitive faculty of angels and the three different means through which angels know: innate species, the angels' own essences, and the divine essence. The third part analyzes the formal structure of angelic knowledge, examining whether it varies, is discursive and propositional, and is liable to error. Finally, we shall inquire into the different kinds of objects that angels know. Some of these objects will have been treated in the second part of this chapter, in particular angelic self-knowledge and supernatural knowledge of God, but in the last part we shall see whether and how angels know other angels, God (by natural means), future contingents, private thoughts, mysteries of faith and unrealized possibilities.

1. *The Relationship between Being and Knowing in Angels*

In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas has a long discussion of the difference between divine and angelic intellectual activity in terms of their respective

ways of being. While in God being and understanding are really identical, they differ in angels. The angel's act of understanding does not coincide with the angel himself, that is, the angelic substance, or with his being (*esse*). Likewise, the intellectual faculty of the angel is distinct from his essence.[2] Only in God are intellect, essence, intellection, and being all identical in reality.

It is not exactly clear what prompted Aquinas to discuss extensively the non-identity of angelic understanding and angelic being in the *Summa theologiae*. The issue is not treated by his contemporaries and is ignored by Aquinas in his earlier writings.[3] Nevertheless, the systematic significance of the discussion is that it serves to highlight the distinction between God the Creator and his creatures, which include the purely spiritual creatures. Aquinas conceives of this distinction in a different way than Bonaventure, who holds a theory of universal hylomorphism, according to which all creatures, including incorporeal angels, are composed of form and matter.[4] In this way, Bonaventure remains within the boundaries of Aristotle's metaphysical framework, which focuses on the distinction between form as the principle of actual being, and matter as the principle of potential being.

Aquinas, however, developed the doctrine that angels are completely immaterial substances. Their immateriality fits their intellectual nature, since understanding or thinking cannot be the act of a body or of a corporeal power. Aristotle had already said that the intellect is "not mixed with the body" and lacks a bodily organ. The intellect knows universals, not material particulars, which are limited to the here and now.[5] Yet, as a Christian thinker, Aquinas maintains that angels are creatures, and that they are not pure actuality like God. Angels are composed of actuality and potentiality, but the relationship between these two metaphysical principles in angels is not to be understood in the same way as the composition

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[2] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.1 ("utrum intelligere angeli sit eius substantia"), 2 ("utrum intelligere angeli sit eius esse"), and 3 ("utrum potentia intellectiva angeli sit eius essentia").

[3] Aquinas mentions it in passing in *Summa contra Gentiles* 4.11 n. 3465, ed. C. Pera, P. Marc, and P. Caramello (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1961), 3:265b.

[4] According to Bonaventure, the matter of spiritual beings differs "physically" from the matter of corporeal beings, but not "metaphysically." See John F. Wippel's chapter in this volume: "Metaphysical Composition of Angels in Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Godfrey of Fontaines."

[5] Aristotle *De anima* 3.4.429a24–27. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.1 co.: "Intelligere autem non potest esse actus corporis, nec alicuius virtutis corporeae, quia omne corpus determinatur ad hic et nunc."

between form and matter. Aquinas goes beyond the Aristotelian paradigm for act-potency composition and conceives of a more fundamental metaphysical distinction, viz., the difference between a thing's essence or nature, which includes both its form and its matter, and the being (*esse*) of the thing. Essence and being relate analogously as potency and act.[6] Aquinas further elaborates the act-potency composition in angels in his discussions of how angelic being and understanding are related. As we shall see, his account involves distinguishing between a thing's first act and its second act.

With regard to the relationship between the angels' being and their understanding, Aquinas faces a dilemma. On the one hand, understanding and being are not identical in angels, for such identity belongs only to God. On the other hand, it seems from Aristotle that because of their intellectual nature, the being of angels can only consist in intellectual activity. Aquinas starts the discussion by extending the well-known statement of Aristotle "to live is for living things to be" (*vivere viventibus est esse*) to intelligent beings. He does so by combining the statement with another quotation from Aristotle, viz., that understanding is a form of living.[7] The result is the extended statement, "To understand is for intelligent beings to be."[8] The suggestion is clear: just as a non-living, dead animal, no longer is, so a non-thinking angel would no longer be. Angels are, therefore, always actually understanding something.[9] The consequence seems to be that the angel's being and his act of understanding are identical. Aquinas finds this unacceptable because it would blur the distinction between the Creator God and the created angel.

The key element in the solution is the distinction between the first and the second act of a thing. This distinction also serves to explain how an angel is composed of actuality and potentiality, even though he is a subsistent, completely immaterial form. The first act is a thing's being (*esse*), that is, the actuality of its substance or essence by which it exists as a

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[6] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.54 nn. 1287–1296, ed. Marietti, 2:174b–175a; *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.2 ad 3.

[7] Aristotle's statement that "to live is for living things to be" is found in *De anima* 2.3.415b13. Aquinas quotes it in *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.1 arg. 1 and 1a.54.2 arg. 2. Aristotle calls understanding "a form of living" in *De anima* 2.2.413a23–31.

[8] It is possible that another clue for the extension is the Neoplatonic triad of being, living, and understanding (*esse, vivere, intelligere*), but Aquinas does not refer to it explicitly in this context.

[9] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.97 n. 1823, ed. Marietti, 2:268a; *Summa theologiae* 1a.50.1 ad 2.

being (*ens*); the second act is a thing's operation (*operatio* or *actio*), the accidental actuality of its power (*virtus*), by which it reaches its perfection, the full realization of its potentiality.[10] In the case of the angel, the power involved is the intellectual faculty, and the operation belonging to that power consists of some intellectual act, either of knowing or of willing. (As said before, the power and the operations of the intellect are the only ones we can reasonably predicate of an immaterial substance.)

Unlike God, an angel is not pure actuality. He neither exists by his own essence nor immediately has his complete potential perfection by his own essence. First, as a creature, the angel owes his being to God. Second, the angel can reach an intellectual perfection that goes beyond the initial status of his created essence as such, be it a perfection that the angel can realize by his own natural faculties, or a supernatural perfection, given by divine grace. This means that the angel's essence and his intellectual power cannot be identical.[11] It also means that both the angel's essence and the angel's power relate to the actualities thereof, viz., being and operation, as potency to act. As essence and power differ in angels, so do their respective actualities.[12] Hence, being (*esse*) and understanding (*intelligere*) are not identical in angels.[13] Thomas adds a second argument why being and understanding differ in angels, based on the proper meaning of "understanding." The intellectual activities of understanding and willing are immanent acts, whose objects are the true (*verum*) and the good (*bonum*). These transcendental notions are convertible with the notion of being (*ens*) and are not limited or determined to some kind or some genus of being. Therefore, the act of understanding or willing as such extends to all beings and "has, by its definition, an infinity."[14] By contrast, the angel's being (*esse*) is not infinite but generically and specifically

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[10] See Rudi te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 40–43. Aquinas a number of times quotes the text from Pseudo-Dionysius (*De Coelesti Hierarchia* 11.2, ed. G. Heil and A. M. Ritter, vol. 2 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991], 42) that says that angels "are divided in essence, virtue and operation," e.g., in *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.3 s.c.; and *De potentia* 3.4 s.c. 2, ed. P. M. Pession in *Quaestiones disputatae* (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1965), 2:45.

[11] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.3.

[12] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.1.

[13] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.2.

[14] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.2 co.: "Secunda autem actio [that is the immanent action] de sui ratione habet infinitatem, vel simpliciter, vel secundum quid. Simpliciter quidem, sicut intelligere, cuius obiectum est verum, et velle, cuius obiectum est bonum, quorum utrumque convertitur cum ente; et ita intelligere et velle, quantum est de se, habent se ad omnia." See also Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.98 n. 1835, ed. Marietti, 2:269b–270a.

determined. Therefore, the being of the angel cannot be identical with his understanding.

As we saw already, Aquinas's dilemma is that he wants to maintain simultaneously that (1) understanding and being are not identical in angels and (2) because of their intellectual nature, the being of angels consists only in intellectual activity. He validates the compatibility of these two seemingly contradictory statements by claiming that the term "vivere" in the statement *vivere viventibus est esse* can have two meanings. It can signify the first act of a living thing, its essence, but it may also signify the thing's second act, its operation, in this case a vital function (*operatio vitae*). In the context of angelic knowledge, Aquinas claims, we should take *vivere* in the latter sense, that is, as an *operatio vitae*.[15]

Aquinas does not spell out explicitly how this solves the apparent contradiction, but we can reconstruct his argument as follows. Taken as "vital function," the verb "to live" can refer to a plurality of various acts, e.g., nutrition, breeding, breathing, sensory perception, understanding, etc. These multiple acts are signs and effects of a thing's single first act, that is, its substantial being of being alive, but they do not coincide with it. The vital functions demonstrate *a posteriori* the existence of the thing's essence or substance (*quia sit*), without, however, showing what the essence of a living thing is (*quid sit*).[16] If we apply this to the intellectual activity of angels, the result is that the verb "to understand" signifies the angel's second acts, that is, a plurality of different and successive acts of knowledge. These acts in turn are effects and hence signs of the angel's first act, his one and permanent act of being an intellectual substance.

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[15] That "to live" has a double meaning is mentioned in *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.2 ad 2 and in *De veritate* 13.4 ad 2, Editio Leonina (Rome, 1882ff.) 22/2:429–30. Aquinas says that "to live" signifies a thing's first act in *In Sent.* 1.33.1.1 ad 1, ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 1:766, and in *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.98 n. 1828, ed. Marietti, 2:268b–269a. It is said to signify a thing's second act in *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.60 n. 1371, ed. Marietti, 2:190a. Aquinas claims in *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.2 ad 1 that, in the context of angelic knowledge, "to live" has to be interpreted in the second sense. With regard to Aristotle's texts, Aquinas substantiates the double meaning of "to live" by relating the phrase "to live is for living beings to be" in *De anima* 2.4.415b13 to the earlier enumeration of various modes of living—including understanding—in *De anima* 2.2.413a23–31.

[16] Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De anima* 2.3, Editio Leonina 45/1:79, lines 106–16.

2. *The Cognitive Power of Angels and Its Means*

Because of its potentiality and finitude, the angelic intellect needs specific means that bring it into act and that also relate the angel's finite cognitive power with the infinity of the objects he can know. As was noted above, every intellect is directed to all that is and to all that is true, and therefore intellectual activity "has, by definition, an infinity."[17] Both Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas distinguish three such means by which angels know and that are also the direct sources from which they know: the angel's own essence, the so-called innate species, and the divine essence or divine Word.[18] The first two have to do with different objects of the angel's natural knowledge. The angel's own essence is the means and the source of his natural self-knowledge, while the innate species constitute the angel's natural knowledge of other created beings. By contrast, knowing things in the divine essence is supernatural knowledge, which is the result of the gift of divine grace and glory, and it extends to things that the angel cannot know by his own natural powers and resources.

In the following section we shall first take a closer look at the angelic intellect in comparison to the human intellect and at the innate species (2.1). Next, we shall discuss the two other means of angelic knowledge, viz., the angel's own essence and the divine Word (2.2 and 2.3). The final section will deal with a form of communication between angels, the so-called illumination (2.4).

2.1. *The Angelic Intellect and Innate Species*

Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure agree that angels have natural knowledge of other created beings by means of innate species. Their explanation of the nature of these species is not based on some positive insight into angelic cognitive processes but, rather, consists in a negative contrast with human intellectual knowledge.[19] Therefore, I will begin by summarizing

[17] See note 14 above.

[18] Bonaventure mentions the first means, the angelic essence itself, only in passing at the beginning of the text that deals with the innate species: *In Sent.* 2.3.2.2.1, *Opera omnia* 2:117–21. He discusses angelic knowledge through the divine essence, the so-called "morning knowledge," in *In Sent.* 2.4.3.1–2, *Opera omnia* 2:138–42. For Aquinas, see, e.g., *Summa theologiae* 1a.56.1, 55.2 and 58.6–7; and *De veritate* 8.4–5, Editio Leonina 22/2:228–36.

[19] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.55.2; Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.2.2.1, *Opera omnia* 2:117–21.

the key features of the medieval Aristotelian theory of human intellectual knowledge, as it is presented by Aquinas.

According to Aristotle, the human intellect is of itself a blank slate (*tabula rasa*), and it has to receive its knowledge from extramental objects through the senses. However, material objects are by themselves only potentially intelligible, due to their concrete materiality. Like the Greek philosophers, the medievals thought of intellectual knowledge as a spiritual process. "Materiality," Aquinas says, "is opposed to intelligibility."[20] According to an Aristotelian theory of knowledge, our intellect needs to abstract from concrete matter and, hence, from the individual characteristics of the extramental object as it is presented by the sensory images (*phantasmata*), in order to render a material object actually intelligible. To explain this process of abstraction, a specific faculty within the human intellect was posited, the so-called agent intellect (*intellectus agens*). The agent intellect abstracts the actually intelligible species from the sensory images.

The intelligible species is "a similitude of the nature of the thing itself, but without those elements that distinguish and multiply it. And in this way a universal is known."[21] The term "similitude" might be confusing here, because it suggests that the intelligible species is a picture of the extramental object. This would raise the problem of representationalism: what guarantees that the species in our mind is a true, adequate representation of external reality? However, for Aquinas, "similitude" means that there is a formal identity between the intelligible species and the nature or essence of the extramental thing: the species is not a picture; it *is* the nature of the thing, though it has "intentional" and not natural being in the mind of the knower.[22]

Next, the intelligible species informs the passive, receptive part of the human intellect, the possible intellect (*intellectus possibilis*), and brings it into act. It is only after being informed and actualized by the intelli-

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[20] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.75 n. 1553, ed. Marietti, 2:219b: "Id quod repugnat intelligibilitati est materialitas"; see also *De unitate intellectus* 5, Editio Leonina 43:312, lines 238–39.

[21] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.76.2 ad 3: "Si vero species sit abstracta a conditionibus materiae individualis, erit similitudo naturae absque iis quae ipsam distinguunt et multiplicant: et ita cognoscetur universale."

[22] Thomas Aquinas, *Quodl.* 8.2.2 co., Editio Leonina 25/1:59: "Unde species intelligibilis est similitudo ipsius essentiae rei, et est quodammodo ipsa quidditas et natura rei secundum esse intelligibile, non secundum esse naturale, prout est in rebus." This is how Aquinas explains Aristotle's statement that "the knower is the thing known" (see Aristotle *De anima* 3.5.430a20, 3.8.431b21–23).

gible species that the possible intellect produces the concept (*conceptio*) or "intention understood" (*intentio intellecta*). The intelligible species is not the object of knowledge but is its means: it is that "through which" (*quo*) something is known, not "what is known" (*quod intelligitur*). The concept is "that which is primarily and *per se* understood."[23] While the formal identity between the intelligible species and the external object guarantees that our knowledge is realistic, the formation of the concept is necessary, because the mode in which we know things need not be the mode in which things exist in themselves. Aquinas follows the rule that "what is known, is in the knower according to the mode of the knower," which means that our intellect can know material things immaterially and particular, individual things universally. Concept formation serves to account for this difference in mode.[24]

The importance of concept formation in angelic knowledge will occupy us in the next section. For now, the issue of abstraction is more relevant. Aquinas and Bonaventure state that, in contrast with human intellectual knowledge, the innate species by which angels know are not derived from extramental objects and, hence, are not the result of abstraction. They are received directly from God, who infuses them as actually intelligible species into the angels' intellects at the moment of their creation. At this point, Aquinas and Bonaventure part ways. Aquinas draws the conclusion that angels do not have an agent intellect, for they do not need one in order to know material beings. Nor is there a possible intellect in angels, because their intellect is not a blank slate; from its very beginning, it is endowed with innate species. Aquinas will only allow one to speak about an agent intellect and a possible intellect in angels if these expressions

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[23] See Aquinas, *De potentia* 8.1 co., p. 215, and 9.5 co., p. 236; and *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.53 nn. 443–44, ed. Marietti, 2:65a, and 4.11 n. 3466, 3:265b. Note that for Aquinas, "conceptio" can mean single concepts as well as propositions: see, e.g., *De veritate* 4.2 co., Editio Leonina 22/1:123–24. A concise survey of Aquinas's view on human intellectual knowledge can be found in Norman Kretzmann, "Philosophy of Mind," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 128–59, at 136–43.

[24] See, e.g., Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.53 n. 443, ed. Marietti, 2:65a, and *De veritate* 2.12 ad 7, Editio Leonina 22/1:86, lines 381–401. See also John F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and the Axiom 'What is Received, is Received According to the Mode of the Receiver,'" in *A Straight Path: Studies in Medieval Philosophy and Culture. Essays in Honor of Arthur Hyman*, ed. Ruth Link-Salinger et al. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 279–89, repr. in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas II* (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), ch. 4.

are taken "in an equivocal sense" (*aequivoce*).[25] Aquinas does not explain what he means by the "equivocal sense" in which an agent and a possible intellect can be predicated of angels. He might allow such predication out of courtesy towards contemporaries like Bonaventure, who—as we shall see in a moment—maintains that angels do have an agent and a possible intellect in the same (univocal) sense as we do. What Aquinas seems to have in mind, from a systematic point of view, is that there is a kind of act-potency composition in the angelic intellect which distinguishes it from the pure act of God's intellect, but that the potency in question does not imply that the angelic intellect is originally empty or knows by abstraction, as the human intellect does. Aquinas indicates that the angelic intellect is in potentiality in two ways. First, there are things that an angel does not know naturally but has to learn from others through illumination or from God through grace. The second reason is that the angelic intellect can be fully actualized and informed by only one innate species at a time. The innate species, infused into the angels' minds at their creation, are actually intelligible by themselves, but they cannot all fully actualize the angel's intellect simultaneously (see section 3.1 below). They belong to an intermediate state halfway between pure potentiality and full actuality. Aquinas calls this state the "accidental potentiality" of the intellect or, more commonly, "habitual knowledge."[26] It also occurs in human knowledge. When I know a rule of French grammar after and because I learnt it, but am not actually thinking of it at this very moment, my knowledge of the rule is not fully actual but habitual. It only takes an act of my will to go from habitually knowing to actually considering the rule. Likewise, the innate species in the angelic intellect constitute habitual knowledge as long as the angel is not actually thinking of the object(s) represented by a particular species.

In contrast with Aquinas, Bonaventure thinks that "possible intellect" and "agent intellect" are said univocally of angels and humans. These terms have the same meaning as when predicated of the human intellect and relate to the process of abstraction. Bonaventure agrees with Aquinas that angels know through innate species. His theological motivation

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[25] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.4 co.; *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.96 n. 1818, ed. Marietti, 2:267b.

[26] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.1 co.; 1a2ae.50.6 co.; *De malo* 16.6 ad 4, Editio Leonina 23:311. The expression "accidental potentiality" occurs in *De veritate* 8.6 ad 7, Editio Leonina 22/2:239. For the distinction between purely potential, habitual, and fully actual intellectual knowledge in humans, see Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De anima* 2.11, Editio Leonina 45/1:110–13.

is the same as Aquinas's: "An angel is not pure act."[27] But his view that angels have a possible and an agent intellect in the same sense as humans do is motivated by the axiom that whatever a lower power can do, a higher power can do: "If a human intellect, tied to a body, can abstract species and impress them on the possible intellect, all the more can an intellect that is not tied to a body do that."[28] Bonaventure does not explain what such a process of abstraction, which seems to require the presence of some sensory "stuff" or substrate from which to abstract, would look like in beings that lack sensory organs and powers. Nor does he say that angels do in fact abstract species from material beings; he says only that they can or could do so. In reality, they have no need to abstract species, because the innate species suffice. For Aquinas, such an idle power would be completely redundant. Moreover, Aquinas thinks that the human intellect's power to abstract intelligible species manifests its excellence in comparison to the sensory powers, but that when compared to the intellect of angels, the very same power demonstrates the inferiority of our intellect.[29] In his view, the axiom that a higher power can do whatever a lower power can do is not to be applied indiscriminately.

In conclusion, Bonaventure's explanation of the act-potency composition in angelic knowledge relies too much on the specifically human mode of knowing, which depends on material, corporeal, and sensory conditions. Aquinas's explanation, as I understand him, can account for an act-potency composition that does not necessarily involve material conditions and that can be articulated in terms of completely spiritual processes, such as the transition from habitual to fully actual knowledge, the succession of cognitive states, illumination, and supernatural grace.

It is not only with regard to their origin that the innate species of the angelic intellect differ from the intelligible species of the human intellect. According to Aquinas, the innate species through which angels know are also of a different nature than our intelligible species. In contrast to our abstracted species, which represent external objects to our intellect only in their universality, the innate species of angels represent things

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[27] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.1, *Opera omnia* 2:119.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.96 n. 1813, ed. Marietti, 2:266b–267a; 2.100 n. 1855, 2:273a.

also according to all their individual, particular characteristics.[30] Aquinas explains that the phrase "to know something by universal knowledge" (*cognoscere aliquid in universali*) has two meanings. The first one characterizes human intellectual knowledge and the second one angelic knowledge:

> To know something by universal knowledge can be understood in two ways. First, it can refer to what is known [*ex parte cogniti*]. If taken this way, to know something by universal knowledge means to know the universal nature of an object . . . , [but] if only the universal nature of a thing is known, the thing is known less perfectly than it would be were it known in its individuality. Secondly, the phrase can refer to the means of cognition [*ex parte eius quo cognoscitur*]. Then to know a thing by universal knowledge, that is by a means which is universal, is more perfect, as long as this knowledge extends to the individuality of the thing.[31]

For example, our intelligible species (and also our concept) of "human being" contains only the universal aspects that are common to all human beings, and nothing else. The angelic counterpart of it is of a fundamentally different kind, for it conveys intellectually also everything that is accidental and proper to every human individual. Thus, through the intelligible species or concept "human being," our intellect intellectually knows Peter and Mary only in a universal way, insofar as they are human beings, though our senses can know them sensorially in their individuality. But the angel knows Peter and Mary intellectually also as Peter and Mary, as individual, concrete, unique persons with their own unique histories. In short, unlike a human intelligible species, an innate species in the angelic mind represents intellectually the individuals that fall under it as singulars. Nevertheless, there are also some aspects about Peter and Mary that the angel does not know through the innate species: Peter and Mary's private thoughts; and what is to become of them in the future. We shall return to these aspects in sections 4.3 and 4.4 below.

In explaining the nature of the innate species in the angels' intellect, Aquinas radically reinterprets Aristotle's conception of intelligible species in such a way that these innate species represent objects intellectually in their material singularity. Bonaventure, conversely, retains Aristotle's view on the nature and intensional content of the species: he thinks that

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[30] Thomas Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* 16, Editio Leonina 40:D 68–D 69, lines 39–69; *De malo* 16.7 ad 5, Editio Leonina 23:316; *Quodl.* 7.1.3 co., Editio Leonina 25/1:13–14; *De veritate* 8.11 ad 13, Editio Leonina 22/2:257.

[31] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.10 ad 1, Editio Leonina 22/2:253.

the innate species in the angelic mind represent objects only as universals, without their individual characteristics.[32] As we shall see later (4.1), this causes particular problems for Bonaventure's account of the angels' knowledge of singulars.

Finally, Aquinas thinks the number of innate species in an angel differs depending on the angel's place in the angelic hierarchy. Higher angels have more powerful intellects than lower angels, and they can therefore know a greater number of external objects through fewer, more comprehensive species.[33] In other words, an ordinary guardian angel might need different innate species that would be the counterparts of the human intelligible species "lion," "cow," and "human being," in order to know all lions, all cows, and all human beings. A cherub, however, might make do with one species "animal" to know all the particular animals from protozoa to blue whales, apes, and humans. The distinct innate species in the angels, as they differ according to the position of each angel in the celestial hierarchy, show a reversed order of intensional content in comparison to human concepts. While the intension of our generic concept of "animal" is poorer than that of "dog," the opposite is true of the innate species in the higher angels.

2.2. *The Angel's Essence*

The second means by which an angel knows is his own essence, and this constitutes, first of all, the angel's self-knowledge.[34] As a pure subsistent form, the angel's essence is by itself an actually intelligible substance, and the angel's intellect is always actualized by the angel's essence. In this respect too, Aquinas's method is to outline a contrast with humans. As the lowest of intellectual beings, the human intellect is in and by itself a purely potential power, a *tabula rasa* that has to be brought into act from the outside by receiving intelligible species of external things through abstraction. That is why the human intellectual soul can reach self-knowledge only after it has been actualized from the outside, and it knows itself not directly but only through a detour by an intricate reflection on

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[32] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.1, *Opera omnia* 2:117–21.

[33] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.55.3; *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.98 n. 1836, ed. Marietti, 2:270a.

[34] The angel's essence is also a means for knowing other things, but only in some vague, general way (*in communi*). See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.55.1 ad 3. Later (in section 4.2) we shall discuss how angelic self-knowledge includes simultaneously a certain knowledge about God.

its intellectual activity.[35] By contrast, an angel knows himself through himself, without mediation and in full transparency. While the proper object of our intellect is the nature of an external, material being, the angel has his own essence as the first object of understanding.[36] For his self-knowledge, the angel has no need of something external to his own essence, like innate species or the divine Word. In this intellectual self-sufficiency, "participating most closely in the First Intellect,"[37] angels somehow resemble God, who knows everything through his own essence.

Nonetheless, even with regard to self-knowledge there remains a fundamental gap between God and angels, according to Aquinas. Not only does God know all other things through his own essence, whereas angels need additional species for knowledge of other beings besides themselves, but God and angels also differ radically in the very act of self-knowledge. In an interesting passage in Book IV of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, when discussing the procession of the Word in God, Aquinas compares human, angelic, and divine self-knowledge as follows:

> The highest and perfect grade of life is the one according to the intellect: for the intellect reflects upon itself and can know itself. But also in the intellectual life diverse grades are found. For the human intellect, although it can know itself, takes the first beginning of its knowledge from without, because it cannot understand without sensory images [*phantasmata*] . . . Therefore, more perfect intellectual life exists in angels, in whom the intellect does not proceed to self-knowledge from anything exterior, but knows itself through itself. Still, their life does not reach the ultimate perfection, because, although their self-concept [*intentio intellecta*] is entirely intrinsic to them, the self-concept is not their substance, because understanding and being [*esse*] are not identical in them . . . Therefore, the ultimate perfection of life belongs to God, in whom understanding and being do not differ . . . Accordingly, the self-concept in God must be the divine essence itself.[38]

It is because of the non-identity between being and understanding that, even in self-knowledge, the angel does not equal the divine unity and simplicity: the angel's self-concept is not identical with himself.[39] Aquinas

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[35] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.87.1.

[36] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.87.3 co.

[37] Thomas Aquinas, *Super librum De Causis expositio* 13, ed. H. D. Saffrey (Fribourg: Nauwelaerts, 1954), 83, lines 21–22.

[38] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 4.11 n. 3465, ed. Marietti, 3:265a–b.

[39] In this I disagree with Tiziana Suarez-Nani, who states that, according to Aquinas, both in God's self-knowledge and in angelic self-knowledge "il y a coïncidence parfaite, identité totale du connaissant et du connu"; see her *Connaissance et langage des anges*

repeatedly cites the Neoplatonic formula from the *Liber de causis* that "in knowing its own essence, every intellectual being returns to itself with a complete return."[40] Given that even in angels self-knowledge and essence differ, we might say that, in its strictest and most perfect sense, the formula applies only to the divine being. For only God generates a self-concept, called the Son or the Word, that is fully identical with the divine essence itself.

2.3. *The Divine Word*

The third means for angelic knowledge is the divine Word or the divine essence.[41] This is supernatural knowledge, given with the beatific vision. In the beatific vision, not only does the angel know the divine essence itself, but the divine essence, as the similitude of all things, is also a direct means for knowing other things. Aquinas and Bonaventure identify this supernatural knowledge through the divine Word with what Augustine had called the angels' "morning knowledge" (*cognitio matutina*).[42] Augustine had interpreted the six days of creation in Genesis not as a chronological sequence but as a metaphor for the structural order of God's one and instantaneous act of creating, within which angels, the intellectual light, were the first to be produced. According to Augustine, the mornings of the following days in the Genesis story stand for the knowledge angels have in the divine Word of the different classes of things that were to be created. The evenings, in contrast, represent the angels' knowledge of created things as these actually exist in themselves.[43]

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selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 38, also 49. She quotes the same passage from the *Summa contra Gentiles* in a footnote (38), but apparently she thinks it is less decisive.

[40] See Aquinas, *De veritate* 1.9 co. and 2.2 ad 2, Editio Leonina 22/1:29–30, lines 43–68, and 45–46, lines 205–41; and *Super librum De Causis expositio* 15, ed. Saffrey, 88–91.

[41] The divine Word and the divine essence are in reality identical, but differ conceptually (see Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.39.1). In discussing beatific knowledge, Aquinas seems to prefer the expression "divine essence," but usually adopts Augustine's usage of "Word" when talking about the distinction, of Augustinian provenance, between the angels' "morning knowledge" and "evening knowledge."

[42] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.6 and 7, and 1a.62.1 ad 3; Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.4.3.1 and 2, *Opera omnia* 2:138–42. See also Barbara Faes de Mottoni, "Tommaso d'Aquino e la conoscenza mattutina e vespertina degli angeli," *Medioevo* 18 (1992): 169–202.

[43] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* 2.8, ed. Joseph Zycha, CSEL 28/1:43–45, also 4.22–24, CSEL 28/1:121–24; *De civitate Dei* 11.7–9, ed. Bernard Dombart and Alphonse Kalb, CCL 48:326–30.

In order to resolve certain tensions in Augustine's texts and to accommodate his views to a more Aristotelian view of knowledge, nature, and natural powers, Bonaventure and Aquinas point out that the distinction between morning and evening knowledge does not concern the objects that are known but rather the means by which angels know, in this case either the divine Word or the innate species.[44] Both authors—although Aquinas more outspokenly—identify the evening knowledge (*cognitio vespertina*) with the knowledge angels have of things in virtue of their own natural powers, viz., through the innate intelligible species. Morning knowledge, in contrast, is identified with their supernatural knowledge of things in virtue of the blessed illumination by the divine Word.

Yet, Aquinas retains the intrinsic link between the natural and the supernatural order more explicitly than Bonaventure. He argues that the natural knowledge angels have of creatures can only be rightfully called "evening knowledge" if the angel does not stop there, clinging to created reality, but refers the natural knowledge of creatures, especially the angel's own self-knowledge, back to the praise of God. Through the good use of natural powers, assisted by grace, the angel "merits," as Aquinas says, God's gift of supernatural morning knowledge.[45] This is reflected in the text of Genesis 1 as follows. In the description of the first day, that is, the moment of the creation of the angels, no mention is made of the morning. That is because first the angels are created ("Let there be light . . .") and at the same instant the angels know themselves by natural knowledge ("there was evening . . ."). At the next instant, the good angels, assisted by grace, refer their self-knowledge back to God in praise and merit the beatific vision (". . . and there was morning"). Conversely, demons do not return to God but remain stuck to created reality, in particular to themselves, not heeding God as their final end. Their knowledge of created reality, however true it may be, is a sinful use of natural powers, and is therefore not really evening knowledge. It is not followed by a morning but turns into night, Aquinas says.[46] Sin, we might add, is excluded from God's good creation, and that is why the night is not mentioned in Genesis 1.

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[44] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.16 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:272, lines 146–55; Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.4.3.1 co., *Opera omnia* 2:140.

[45] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.17 ad 1, Editio Leonina 22/2:275–76. See also Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.62.4 co.; and *Quodl.* 9.4.3 co., Editio Leonina 25/1:105–6.

[46] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.16 ad 6 and ad 8, Editio Leonina 22/2:273–74.

It is important to note that the actual supernatural state of angels in the beatific vision—or, for that matter, the state of damnation of demons—does not annul their natural operations, including their natural acts of knowledge. Augustine had said that evening and morning knowledge in angels exist simultaneously. However, by introducing the Aristotelian notions of nature and natural powers in their reading of Augustine's text, Bonaventure and Aquinas make it difficult to explain how the angels' natural acts of knowing can survive in the light of the supernatural perfection. Because the natural act of knowing relates to the supernatural vision as the imperfect to the perfect, it seems that the former dissolves upon the realization of the latter. As human faith will cease to exist when we see and know God's essence, likewise, it seems, angels must lose their natural operations in the beatified vision.

Bonaventure and Aquinas try to solve the problem by arguing that the comparison with human faith fails. According to Aquinas, the imperfection inherent in faith and the perfection of the beatific vision are opposite and mutually exclusive, for faith is by definition "of things unseen" (Heb. 11:1) and is in direct conflict with vision. However, the perfection of supernatural knowledge does not rule out the imperfection of natural knowledge. The latter has and keeps a structural order that undergirds the former: nature and natural operations are even a prerequisite for the existence of what makes them supernaturally perfect. Aquinas makes a comparison with a form that is joined to matter: the form eliminates the privation inherent in the matter, but not the potentiality of the matter. The potentiality of the matter is even necessary for the form to exist. The same goes for natural and supernatural activity. Bonaventure likewise claims that the two do not exclude each other but that "the first one serves the second, and the second one perfects the first."[47]

Furthermore, as we shall see in section 3.1, Bonaventure and Aquinas argue that no intellect can be informed by more than one intelligible species at a time. However, the distinction between natural and supernatural knowledge in angels concerns not different intelligible (innate) species but, rather, different kinds of epistemic means. Simultaneously knowing things by different means is not impossible, Bonaventure and Aquinas claim. Therefore, knowing by an innate species is compatible

[47] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.7 ad 3, 1a.62.7 ad 2 and ad 3. Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.4.3.2 ad 3, *Opera omnia* 2:142.

with knowing by the divine Word at the same time.[48] Both Bonaventure and Aquinas want to maintain the ongoing reality of natural operations of angels in their actual supernatural state of bliss. In other words, the speculations about the natural knowledge of angels are more than only a hypothetical thought experiment about creatures existing in a merely natural state (*in naturalibus tantum*), either in some possible world other than the actual one or in a remote past of this world.[49] They offer a particular perspective on the question of the structural relationship between the supernatural and nature, between God's gift of deification to creatures and the integrity of their subsistent existence and their own activity. This can also help us to think better about the relationship between grace and nature in humans.

2.4. *Illumination*

Higher angels can also assist lower ones in their cognitive activity by "illuminating" them. Reading Aquinas's texts gives the impression that the specifically Augustinian background of the illumination theory does not harmonize easily with an Aristotelian view of knowledge, but Aquinas adopts the classical topic of angelic illumination and tries to reformulate it in more Aristotelian terms. A higher angel, he says, illuminates or teaches a lower angel in two respects: by "strengthening" the cognitive faculty of the lower angel and, at the same time, by "somehow dividing" into smaller elements what he knows through one, more universal concept or innate species, so as to accommodate his knowledge to the capacities of the lower angel, who knows through a greater number of more limited species or concepts. This does not involve the infusion of some new intellectual light or new innate species into the mind of the lower angel, but rather is a kind of reinforcement of what is already present in the lower angel's intellect.[50]

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[48] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.4.3.2 ad 2, *Opera omnia* 2:142. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.7 co.; *Quodl.* 9.4.2, Editio Leonina 25/1:103–4. See also note 56 below.

[49] Bonaventure and Aquinas disagree on the question of whether the angels ever actually existed in a merely natural state (*in naturalibus tantum*) at the beginning of creation or whether they were immediately created in the state of grace. Bonaventure thinks the latter is more probable, Aquinas the former: see Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.4.1.2, *Opera omnia* 2:132–34; Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.62.3. The issue proves to be irrelevant for the distinction between nature and the supernatural.

[50] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.106.1; *De veritate* 9.1 co., ad 2, and ad 10, Editio Leonina 22/2:279–80, 282.

What the lower angel comes to know through illumination concerns the *rationes divinorum operum*, the plans and meanings of God's providential works, about which a higher angel can know more as he sees the divine Word more perfectly.[51]

Aquinas's texts on angelic illumination are not easy to understand. Expressions such as *quasi* or *quodammodo* occur often, and he uses many examples from corporeal reality and from our human experience. However, Aquinas sketches an image of angels who constitute a community and form part of the celestial church. They are not isolated monads, each focused on its own individual relationship with God. Rather, they continuously communicate with each other, with the higher, stronger ones always assisting the lower ones in a kind of holy solidarity.[52]

3. *Modes of Angelic Knowledge*

In this part we shall take a closer look at the formal structure of the knowledge of angels. Four questions will be discussed: (1) can angels know several things at the same time; (2) does their knowledge proceed discursively; (3) do angels know in the form of propositions; and (4) can angels be mistaken? The discussion of the first question serves to distinguish the angel from God and to highlight its status as a creature. The other three questions concern the difference between angelic and human knowledge.

3.1. *Simultaneous Knowledge of a Plurality of Objects?*

According to Aquinas, the unity of an act of knowledge is founded on the unity of its formal principle, or intelligible species, which is a similitude of the extramental object(s) known. Whatever can be known by means of one formal principle can be known at once, in one act.[53] As we saw in section 2.1, in the case of the angel's supernatural knowledge, the means is the one divine Word or essence, which is the similitude of all things. Therefore, in the beatific vision, the angel knows everything at once.

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[51] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.106.1 ad 1 and ad 2; 1a.106.4 ad 3; *De veritate* 9.1 ad 9, Editio Leonina 22/2:282.

[52] On angelic illumination, see also Bernd Roling, "Angelic Language and Communication," in this volume.

[53] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.2; 1a.85.4; *De veritate* 8.14, Editio Leonina 22/2:264–65.

However, each of the innate species, which constitute the angel's natural knowledge, represents only a limited number of objects. The number varies, depending on the scope of the species, which, in turn, depends on the position of the angel in the angelic hierarchy.

Now, the angel's intellect cannot be informed by more than one innate species at a time, just like a body can have only one shape at a time.[54] If the angel wants to know a different category of things, his intellect needs to be informed by a different innate species, which must be brought from its habitual state into full actuality. It is the succession of distinct acts of knowledge, mediated by different innate species, which causes the angels' natural knowledge to be subject to some kind of time. The substantial being of angels is said to be measured by what is called the *aevum*, a mode of being and of duration that is not measured by time because their substantial being is in and by itself not subject to any succession of earlier and later: Angels are not subject to generation and corruption, that is, they are not born and do not die. In contrast, the angels' natural accidental perfections such as knowing and willing are measured by time, for by nature they cannot know simultaneously, by one act, all they can know. As we saw in section 2.1, angels know by different innate species. This constitutes a succession of different acts of knowing and, hence, establishes a form of time. Aquinas points out that this angelic time is not the same as the continuous time of physical reality and movement. It is rather a discrete time that consists only of a "variation of earlier and later." Unlike the changes in material reality that constitute "continuous time," the incorporeal acts of the intellect succeed each other instantaneously and lack all intermediary stages of gradual change.[55] This kind of temporality in angelic knowledge will prove to be crucial in explaining why angels do not know future contingents, as we shall see in section 4.3.

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[54] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.85.4; *Quodl.* 9.4.2 co., Editio Leonina 25/2:104.

[55] For Aquinas's discussion of the differences between eternity, *aevum*, and time, see, e.g., *Summa theologiae* 1a.10.5 co. For the difference between discrete and continuous time, see Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2.2.1.1 ad 4, ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 2:64–65; *De veritate* 8.4 ad 15, Editio Leonina 22/2:234; *Quodl.* 2.3, Editio Leonina 25/2:218–20; and *Summa theologiae* 1a2ae.113.7 ad 5. See also Richard Cross, "Angelic Time and Motion: Bonaventure to Duns Scotus," in this volume. Howard P. Kainz downplays the importance of (discrete) time in the natural cognition of angels and claims "there is no temporal transition in a separate substance from one object to another": see his *Active and Passive Potency in Thomistic Angelology* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972), 58. Later, he does admit of "a certain sequence among these different aspects or orientations of intellection" (60). Kainz mentions the angels' knowledge of the future only in a footnote (59).

While Aquinas denies that the angelic intellect can be actually informed by more than one innate species at a time, we already saw in section 2.3 that he and Bonaventure do acknowledge the simultaneity of natural knowledge through an innate species and supernatural knowledge through the divine Word. The reason they give is that these two forms of knowledge imply different kinds of means, viz., an innate species and the Word, which do not exclude each other. From this we might draw a corollary regarding the angel's self-knowledge that is not found explicitly in Aquinas's or Bonaventure's texts.[56] Because the angel's self-knowledge involves yet another kind of epistemic means, viz., the angel's essence, it could be inferred that angelic self-knowledge can be simultaneous with knowledge of other things—mediated through either an innate species or the divine Word.[57] This would justify Aquinas's claim that an angel is always in a state of knowing himself actually.[58]

3.2. *Angelic Knowledge is Non-Discursive*

Aquinas denies that angelic knowledge is discursive. When discussing human reason (*ratio*), Aquinas distinguishes three operations or acts.[59] The first operation consists in forming single concepts and the second one in forming propositions. These two belong to human reason "insofar as it is a certain intellect (*intellectus*)." The third act of reason belongs to reason proper, and it involves reasoning (*ratiocinari*), that is, "to proceed (*discurrere*) from one thing to another so as to come to knowledge of the unknown through what is known." The first two acts, the formation of single concepts and of propositions, reflect the perfection of actual knowledge and insight, and they relate to the third one, which reflects the process of coming to know, as rest to movement. The two intellectual acts

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[56] In *De veritate* 8.14 ad 6, Editio Leonina 22/2:265–66, Aquinas suggests briefly that angelic self-knowledge is "as it were formal" (*quasi formale*) with respect to their knowledge of other things. Elsewhere, Aquinas makes a similar suggestion about the relationship between the angels' supernatural knowledge through the divine Word and natural knowledge through innate species: *In Sent*. 2.3.3.4 co., ed. Mandonnet, 2:123–24; *Quodl*. 9.4.2 co., Editio Leonina 25/1:104. This hints at a further explanation of how it is possible that two different epistemic means do not exclude each other at the same time. However, the texts are too short to draw more conclusions. The texts in *De potentia* 4.2 ad 10 and ad 19 that deal explicitly with the topic are not authentic: *S. Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia*, ed. Roberto Busa, 7 vols. (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), 1:719.

[57] See also Wilhelm Schlössinger, "Die Erkenntnis der Engel," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und spekulative Theologie* 23 (1909): 45–84, at 74–76, for a similar reading of Aquinas.

[58] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.6 ad 7 and 8.14 ad 6, Editio Leonina 22/2:239, 265–66.

[59] Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Posteriorum* 1.1, Editio Leonina 1*/2:4–5, lines 32–50.

can be the starting point as well as the endpoint of discursive reasoning.[60] It is important to note that discursive reasoning is not related exclusively to the second operation of the intellect and its propositional form, which starts from and returns to self-evident, propositional first principles, like the law of the excluded middle. Discursive reasoning also occurs in the first operation of the intellect, when, starting from a single, intuitively grasped concept such as "being" or "one," we investigate the definition of something by dividing the concept further and forming composed concepts like "corporeal, living, animal, rational being."[61]

In short, rational discursivity is the imperfect state of intellectual insight; it is intellect in the state of becoming. As an imperfect form of intellect and as typical of the human intellect, discursivity does not belong to angels.[62] Angels see instantly (*statim*), with a simple intuition (*intuitio simplex*) and without discursion, all that can be known by their natural epistemic means, that is, by the innate species and by their own essence. Angels do not come to know gradually, little by little, but, rather, they know at once.[63]

We have to consider a little more closely one particular case of discursive reasoning, viz., inductively arguing from an effect to a cause (*quia sit*) or deductively from a cause to an effect (*propter quid sit*). This will prove to be important when discussing the angel's natural knowledge of God in his effects, of future effects in general, and of private thoughts in their causes, as well as the angel's supernatural knowledge (part 4). Usually, acquiring knowledge of a cause by knowing its effect or vice versa involves discursiveness, because it proceeds by syllogisms. We reason from one thing to another, and this involves distinct acts of knowledge: the act of

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[60] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.79.8 co.; *De veritate* 15.1 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:479–80. Discursive reasoning covers both dialectical, inductive reasoning (*via inquisitionis* or *inventionis*) and demonstrative, deductive reasoning (*via iudicii*).

[61] See, e.g., Aquinas, *De veritate* 11.1 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:350–51, lines 264–79. The *via divisionis* is the best way to come to know (real) definitions: see Jan Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 69–72, 192–96.

[62] Martin Lenz offers an interesting interpretation in which he applies what Aquinas says about the discursiveness of Christ's human knowledge to angelic knowledge; see his "Why Can't Angels Think Properly? Ockham against Chatton and Aquinas," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), 155–67, at 162. I do not think the comparison works, because Aquinas wants to safeguard precisely the *human* character of the knowledge Christ's soul has.

[63] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.3 co.; *De veritate* 8.15 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:268–69.

knowing the effect leads to a different cognitive act, viz., the act of knowing the cause. However, it can also happen, Aquinas claims, that we know the cause not *from* but *in* the effect by one and the same cognitive act. In order to elucidate this, he uses the example of seeing something in a mirror. What we see is a reflection in a mirror (the effect), but at the same time we see that of which it is a reflection (the cause). Such knowledge of a cause *in* an effect is intuitive and does not involve discursiveness. Therefore, it can be attributed to angels.[64] However, we might add that in another way the example of the mirror and a reflection fails to represent the angel's intuitive knowledge. In a mirror, images are reflected as actually distinct images, but that is not the case with intuiting effects in a cause. In their cause, effects exist not as actually distinct but as virtually contained in the cause and as united. The consequence is that when one knows or sees a cause, one does not necessarily know actually all the distinct effects of that cause. Only one who "comprehends" the cause knows all its effects simultaneously.[65]

3.3. *Angelic Knowledge is Non-Propositional*

It is not only rational discursivity that Aquinas excludes from angelic knowledge. He also denies that angels perform the second, intellectual operation of the human mind: angels do not form mental propositions. The common Latin expression for the second operation of the intellect is "to compose and to divide," that is, to make affirmative and negative propositions.

Aquinas deals with the topic only in three, relatively late texts.[66] Because of the weakness of our intellectual light, he says, we humans do not understand at once everything that can be known about a thing. We start by apprehending the quiddity of a thing in the first operation of the

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[64] See Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.15 ad 4 and ad 6, Editio Leonina 22/2:270. See also Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.3 ad 1 and ad 2; and *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.49 n. 2265, ed. Marietti, 3:66a–b.

[65] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.11.2.2 ad 4, ed. Mandonnet, 2:285; 4.49.2.5 ad 6, *S. Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia*, ed. Busa, 1:687; *De veritate* 8.4 co. and 20.4 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:231 and 581; *Summa theologiae* 1a.12.8 ad 2; *Lectura super Ephesios* 2 n. 151, ed. R. Cai (Turin: Marietti, 1953), 39.

[66] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.4; 1a.85.5 co.; *De malo* 16.6 ad s.c. 1, Editio Leonina 23:312. In one earlier text, *De veritate* 15.1 ad 5, Editio Leonina 22/2:481, Aquinas says that the formation of propositions is found in angels "because they know by a plurality of species." He abandons this position in later texts.

intellect. Next, we need to "compose and divide" in order to flesh out or unpack, so to say, all that is virtually contained in the quiddity: the properties, accidents, and relationships of the thing. In contrast, the intellectual light of angels is so strong that it immediately has full knowledge of a thing at the first apprehension of it.

It is not clear whether this "composing and dividing" strictly means the formation of propositions or whether it indicates merely a form of non-propositional discursive reasoning. For example, if we "unpack" the properties of a quiddity such as "man" as "rational, two-legged animal that can laugh and that has no wings," we compose and divide single concepts in the definition, but strictly we do not form propositions. No copula verb is involved, but only the juxtaposition of notions.[67]

I would like to suggest a different, more speculative argument *ad mentem Thomae*. The reason that angels do not know propositionally is not so much the weakness of human intellects as such (which varies from person to person and can be strengthened by practice), but the natural, necessary and permanent dependence of our intellect on and orientation towards the senses.

Aquinas himself argues for such a dependence and orientation when he says that "turning to" the sensory images (*conversio ad phantasmata*) is always necessary for the human intellect in its act of actually understanding.[68] Furthermore, when discussing how the human intellect can form propositions about singulars such as "Socrates is a man," Aquinas speaks of a "return to" (*reditio super*) or "reflection (*reflexio*) to the sensory images" by the intellect.[69] The point is that the "return (*reditio*) to the sensory images" in the formation of singular propositions is not identical with the "turning (*conversio*) to these images." The latter is required in every operation of the human intellect, including the first operation; the former only in the formation of (singular) propositions. Nevertheless, the

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[67] See Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.108 n. 2836, ed. Marietti, 3:163b–164a; and *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.5. Both texts deal with the question of whether angels can err cognitively. Aquinas says here that the first operation of the human intellect can imply "composing and dividing," but the most natural reading of this expression would be to identify it with (rational) discursiveness, not with the (intellectual) formation of propositions. The example given in the *Summa theologiae* text is *animal quadrupes volatile*, which is a composition but, since it is not truth-functional, not a proposition.

[68] See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.84.7 co.

[69] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.86.1 co.; 2a2ae.47.3 ad 1; *Sentencia libri De anima* 2.3, Editio Leonina 45/1:211–12, lines 175–95.

"return" or "reflection" is based on the "turning." In some way it makes explicit the "turning to the sensory images" and resumes, consciously and intentionally, the sensory substrate of human intellectual knowledge, which represents the extramental thing in its individuality, that is, as it exists in reality. Although Aquinas mentions the "returning to the sensory images" only in the context of the formation of singular propositions, it might be reasonable to extend it so as to include universal propositions as well. If a universal proposition such as "all human beings are rational" has existential import, that is, is intended to say something about real people, the subject term "all human beings" has to refer to concrete, corporeal individuals. The "returning to the sensory images" can account for that.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into more detail about this, but my proposal could offer a Thomistic alternative to Aquinas's own argument why angels do not know through propositions.[70] Because their knowledge is not derived from (material) objects, angels need not abstract intelligible species from sensory images, omit the individual, concrete characteristics of the objects, and form universal concepts in order to gain (habitual) intellectual knowledge. Nor do they have to turn to sensory images of the objects, or return to these images and form propositions, in order to know in full actuality. In other words, angels do not form propositions for exactly the same reason that they do not form general (single) concepts, as our intellect does in its first operation.

3.4. *Error in the Angelic Mind*

Finally, because angels know neither discursively nor propositionally, the angelic intellect cannot fall into error, according to Aquinas.[71] Falsity consists formally in combining cognitively what does not belong together in reality—or dividing, that is, separating, in the mind what is joined in reality. This happens primarily in the second operation of the intellect,

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[70] I have elaborated the proposal that the formation of a proposition and the truth-functionality of propositions are related to a *reditio* or *reflexio ad phantasmata*, which is based on the *conversio ad phantasmata*, in my "A Reinterpretation of Aquinas' Correspondence Definition of Truth," in *Intellect et imagination dans la philosophie médiévale, Actes du XIe Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale de la Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale (S.I.E.P.M.), Porto, du 26 au 31 août 2002*, ed. Maria Cândida Pacheco and José Francisco Meirinhos, vol. 3: *1431–1446* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 1431–46.

[71] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.5; *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.108 nn. 2835–36, ed. Marietti 3:163b–164a; *De malo* 16.6, Editio Leonina 23:307–13.

because the proposition is the proper bearer of truth-values, e.g., in "Barack Obama is white." Falsity may also occur in the first operation of the intellect, but only accidentally, when through discursive reasoning we combine single concepts together in a (nominal) definition of something that does not exemplify all these concepts together. A "four-footed winged animal," for example, does not exist in reality and, hence, it is false.[72]

The cause and source for the falsity in the intellect is its intrinsic connection to the external and internal senses, especially the imagination. "Every deception of the intellect," Aquinas says, "appears to happen from the fact that the intellect apprehends the forms of things mixed together with sensory images."[73] We can therefore conclude that as the intellect of angels is completely immune from material conditions, it does not know through discursive reasonings or propositions, and, hence, it is not liable to falsity.

One proviso has to be made: the absence of falsity concerns only the angels' natural knowledge of known objects according to their nature. Demons can err when they judge about things only according to their natural order and deliberately leave out the supernatural, gratuitous order of God's actual providence, such as when they think that a dead person will not rise or that a man (viz., Christ) is not God. The good angels always make such natural judgments conditionally, "allowing for the divine providential plan."[74]

Likewise, Bonaventure says that even demons basically do not err in their natural knowledge of speculative truths, though they do err with respect to practical, moral knowledge about what ought to be done. Nevertheless, their speculative intellect is somehow clouded by their guilt, and they can judge erroneously, especially about contingent matters.[75] The reason seems to be that angels have conjectural knowledge about what is probable and that demons judge wrongly about probabilities because of their arrogance and curiosity.[76]

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[72] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.5 co., see also 1a.85.6 co.

[73] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.108 n. 2835, ed. Marietti 3:163b; see also 3.91 n. 2665, ed. Marietti 3:132b.

[74] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.5 co.

[75] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.7.2.1.1 co., *Opera omnia* 2:189–91.

[76] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.4.2.1 ad 2, *Opera omnia* 2:136; *In Sent*. 2.7.2.1.1 ad opp., *Opera omnia* 2:191.

4. *Objects of Angelic Knowledge*

Whether and how angels know themselves, God, and individual material beings has for the most part already been addressed in part 2. The following topics remain to be discussed: Bonaventure's view on the angels' knowledge of corporeal individuals, and both Bonaventure's and Aquinas's views on angelic knowledge of other angels, angels' natural knowledge of God, and their knowledge of future contingents, the private thoughts of other angels or humans, and the mysteries of faith.

4.1. *Angelic Knowledge of Material Singulars and of Other Angels*

We saw earlier how Aquinas explains the angels' knowledge of concrete individuals in corporeal reality by means of innate species that comprehend all the material and individual characteristics of the relevant objects. It was also mentioned that in this respect Bonaventure did not modify Aristotle's conception of the intelligible species in the way that Aquinas did. Bonaventure thinks that the intension of the angelic innate species is universal in the same way that human intelligible species (and concepts) are. That is why he needs a separate argument to account for the angels' knowledge of material singulars. Bonaventure does so in two steps. First, he says that an angel can combine several universal species into one species that represents a concrete singular, as follows: "If I have with me the species of a figure, the species of a human being, the species of a color and of time, and I compose them with each other, then without the new reception of a species I know an individual in its own nature."[77] However, because the composed species might only be a fiction, e.g., a chimera, a second step is needed. The angel has to apply the intramental species to an existing individual in reality by "directing his gaze" to the latter.

Both steps of Bonaventure's argument are problematic. As Aquinas objects to the first step, combining a number of universal species—however large that number is—will never result in a species that represents one and only one individual object, for it remains possible that the whole combination fits several distinct individuals.[78] Aquinas also criticizes Bonaventure's second step for begging the question. Applying the composed species to the extramental real thing presupposes knowledge of the

[77] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.1 co., *Opera omnia* 2:120.

[78] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.3.3.3 co., ed. Mandonnet, 2:120–21; *De veritate* 2.5 co., Editio Leonina 22/1:62; *Quodl*. 7.1.3, Editio Leonina 25/1:13, lines 67–78.

latter.[79] The angel can only direct his gaze to the real thing and apply the species to it if he first knows where to look, where to direct his gaze.

Bonaventure is familiar with the latter counterargument and presents it as an objection to his own position. In answering the objection, he acknowledges that some prior knowledge is required before the angel turns his gaze towards the extramental thing. He identifies this knowledge as "knowledge of the place" (*cognitio loci*) which precedes the angel's turning to that place and the subsequent application of the composed species to the real things that happen to exist in that place.[80]

However, the idea of a prior "knowledge of place" seems to amount to a *petitio principii* as well. After all, it cannot mean universal knowledge of space in general, for then the angel still would not know where to look. It must be singular knowledge of one particular place, and so the question returns as to how an angel can know a singular.[81]

Whether angels know other angels is not discussed by Bonaventure. Aquinas discusses a large number of opinions on this matter and concludes that an angel knows other angels by means of innate species in a way that does not differ essentially from how he knows corporeal beings.[82]

4.2. *Angelic Natural Knowledge of God*

No creature—not even an angel—can know the divine essence by means of its own natural cognitive faculties. Seeing the divine essence belongs to the supernatural beatific vision.[83] However, Bonaventure and Aquinas argue that an angel can have some natural knowledge about God on the basis of God's effects. In knowing an effect, one also knows something about its cause precisely as cause.[84]

Again, Aquinas discusses the issue in greater detail than Bonaventure. He points out that although quidditative knowledge of God is beyond the

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[79] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.3.3.3 co., ed. Mandonnet, 2:120–21; *Summa theologiae* 1a.14.11 co.

[80] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.1 ad 4, *Opera omnia* 2:120–21.

[81] I leave aside the metaphysical problem that such *a priori* knowledge of particular places seems to imply a Newtonian view of space as an absolute container, contradicting Aristotle's conception of space as relative. I do not know of any medieval author who held a Newtonian view.

[82] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.7, Editio Leonina 22/2:239–45; *Summa theologiae* 1a.56.2.

[83] See, for instance, Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.52 nn. 2290–96, ed. Marietti, 3:71a–b; and Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.2, *Opera omnia* 2:122–24.

[84] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.2, *Opera omnia* 2:122–24. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.56.3; *De veritate* 8.3 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:225–26, lines 217–24; *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.49 nn. 2265, 2270–74, ed. Marietti 3:66a–68a.

angels' natural powers, they do know that God exists (*quia sit*). They also know that he is the cause of all things, exceeds everything, and is removed from all things—the so-called "triple way of Pseudo-Dionysius."[85] In knowing that God exists and in knowing him as the eminent, non-univocal cause of everything, angels do not fundamentally differ from humans, for the "triple way" also determines our human knowledge of God.[86] In other words, natural angelic and human knowledge about God differ only in degree, not in kind, because both angels and humans naturally know God only from his effects, that is, from created reality.[87]

The differences between human and angelic natural knowledge of God concern not so much the content as the type of effect from which God is known and hence the mode by which he is known. In the previous section (3.2), we saw that angels do not know discursively. In particular, they do not reason from effect to cause. They know the cause *in* the effect, as when something is seen not directly in itself, but in a mirror. Such knowledge of a cause is mediated, yet it is intuitive and not discursive, occurring all at once. In the case of the angel's natural knowledge of God, it is the angel's own created essence that functions as a mirror of its cause, its creator.

Aquinas argues repeatedly that the reason why the angels know God in their own essences is not so much that these essences are caused or created by God but because they are images of God. All creatures, including the corporeal ones, bear some general kind of similitude to their First Cause—at least insofar as they are beings—in accordance with the principle that "every agent causes something similar to itself." However, it is only creatures with an intellectual nature that are also made in God's image. They resemble God not only in a generic sense, to the extent that they are and that they live, but also in their own specific form, viz., in being intellectual. That is what makes intellectual creatures images of God, for the concept of "image" includes not just a similitude in general but also a similitude according to a specific form.[88]

Aquinas and Bonaventure explain the angels' natural knowledge of God only in terms of their knowledge of themselves (or of other angels) insofar as angels are specifically images of God. However, I do not think that they

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[85] For the "triple way" of knowing God by causality, negation and eminence, see Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 49–55.

[86] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.12.12 co.

[87] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.49 nn. 2270–74, ed. Marietti 3:67a–68a.

[88] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.93.2 co.

mean to exclude the possibility of angelic knowledge of God through other creatures, especially material creatures, insofar as these bear some generic similitude to God as their cause. It seems more probable that Bonaventure and Aquinas focus on the first mode of knowledge because it is the most excellent and the clearest example of natural knowledge of God, while keeping open the possibility that God is also known in his other creatures. In other words, the metaphysical axiom that "every agent causes something similar to itself," has, I think, an epistemological implication: every cause can (somehow) be known *in* its effect (and vice versa).[89]

Although he does not discuss it explicitly, Aquinas also suggests a contrast between human and angelic self-knowledge as a means for natural knowledge of God. Humans, though they are also images of God, do not know their own intellectual nature immediately through a kind of intuitive, intellectual introspection as angels do.[90] The same goes for their knowledge of the intellectual nature of their fellow human beings, who are also made into God's image. In short, although Aquinas only hints at this, he suggests that the mediacy of human self-knowledge—as opposed to the immediacy of angelic self-knowledge—is the reason why our natural knowledge of God is discursive, while the angel's natural knowledge of God is not.[91]

4.3. *Angelic Knowledge of Future Contingents*

Bonaventure and Aquinas agree that future contingents are beyond the scope of the angels' natural knowledge. To know future contingents is a divine prerogative.

Like humans, angels can know future things or events if these are now already determined and necessitated by their causes, e.g., future eclipses of the sun. Such future events can now be known with certainty in their

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[89] The angels' non-discursive natural knowledge of God seems to be identical with the special knowledge of God that the first human beings had before the fall; see Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.94.1 co. and ad 3. They did not know God demonstratively *from* his effects, but intuitively *in* his effects, "especially the intelligible effects" (ad 3). "Especially" does not mean "exclusively." For Bonaventure, see *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.2 ad 2, *Opera omnia* 2:123.

[90] See section 2.2 above.

[91] If I understand her correctly, Suarez-Nani locates the difference between angels and human beings with regard to knowledge of God through self-knowledge in the angels' being totally God's image, while humans are God's image only partially, viz., by their intellect: Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage des anges*, 49 note 2. In my view, the key issue is rather that human self-knowledge is mediated and discursive, in contrast to angelic self-knowledge.

causes.[92] There are also effects that mostly, but not necessarily and always, follow from their causes. Future effects of this kind can only be known conjecturally and fallibly in their causes. Third, effects can come from fully indeterminate causes (*causae ad utrumlibet*) such as free will, and these are completely unknowable in their causes. They can only be known in themselves, that is, when they actually exist.[93] Nonetheless, angels may have some conjectural foreknowledge of such indeterminate and free effects when they take into account other causes that influence the indeterminate proximate cause of the effect. For example, taking into account a person's habits and character, angels can surmise with some accuracy how that person will freely act, but they can never know her future free acts with absolute certainty. Angels can also foreknow with certainty what is contingent with respect to one cause, but necessary with respect to a combination of causes.[94] In this, there is no qualitative difference between angels and human beings; angels are only more proficient in these matters than we are.

Bonaventure and Aquinas differ with regard to the underlying reasons why angels cannot know the future in itself, but only in its present causes. Bonaventure points to the receptivity of angelic knowledge and its dependence on the existence of its objects, and he contrasts it with God's practical, creative knowledge, which does not depend causally on its objects but causes them to be.[95] Aquinas, conversely, contrasts angelic innate species with human intelligible species. While our intelligible species are derived from the known objects, the innate species of angels are derived from God and from his creative knowledge of things. Therefore, the angels' knowledge is like God's knowledge in that their innate species are not causally dependent on the things that are known.[96]

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[92] Such necessary effects can only be known in their causes, not in themselves. It seems that usually this is not a meaningful distinction for Aquinas. However, in *De veritate* 2.5 co., Editio Leonina 22/1:62, lines 224–28, he says that a knowledgeable astronomer can know "each eclipse that will be in a hundred years; but still he would not know it insofar as it is something singular, so that he would know whether it occurs now or not, like a peasant knows when he sees it [the eclipse]." And in *De malo* 16.7, Editio Leonina 23:316, lines 249–53, he says that "to know something future in its cause is nothing else but to know the present inclination of a cause to an effect. Therefore, this is properly [*proprie*] not to know something future, but to know something present."

[93] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.7.2.1.3 co., *Opera omnia* 2:194–95. Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.12 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:258–59; *De malo* 16.7, Editio Leonina 23:315; *Summa theologiae* 1a.57.3.

[94] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.12 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:259.

[95] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.7.2.1.3 co., *Opera omnia* 2:194–95; *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.1 ad 2, *Opera omnia* 2:120. See also section 4.1 above.

[96] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.9 ad 1, Editio Leonina 22/2:250; *Summa theologiae* 1a.55.2 ad 1.

But Aquinas then faces a problem: why is an unchanging innate species that does not depend on the object known, and that originates from God's practical knowledge, not sufficient for knowing future things? Why does Gabriel's innate species of "cow" give him knowledge of all individual cows in the present and the past, but not in the future? The solution Aquinas offers is basically twofold. First, the future in itself does not exist and is not determinate. It is therefore unknowable by itself: viz., not because of a deficiency in the cognitive power of angels but because of its own lack of being and determinateness. The background of this is that Aquinas has what nowadays is called a "dynamic," tensed view of time with an open future. According to this view, the ever changing present now of time is like the moving tip of a pen, drawing the line of the past behind it while in front of the tip there is only the blank space of the future.[97] Second, the angel's intellect is not eternal like God's and does not embrace the whole of time. As we saw in section 3.1, the (natural) activity of the angelic intellect is not immutable but successive and subject to (discrete) time. In discussing whether demons know the future, Aquinas says:

> Everything that is in time in whatever way is related to the future as future [*sub ratione futuri*]. And therefore it is impossible that any knowledge that is subject to the order of time knows the future in itself. Such is every knowledge of a creature.[98]

Though it is not clear how exactly Aquinas conceives of the relationship between the discrete time of angelic intellections and the continuous time of corporeal reality, they are connected. The future of our world is also future to angels and their (natural) knowledge. Only divine knowledge is eternal, outside the whole temporal order. That is why what is future in itself and in relation to all temporal being and to all creaturely knowledge is not future in relation to God and his knowledge: it is present-to-God in virtue of God's eternal way of being and of knowing.

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[97] There are two rival theories in the present-day philosophy of time. The first one is called dynamic, tensed, or A-theory, in which the monadic, mutable properties of past, present, and future are basic. The second one is called static, tenseless, or B-theory, and it considers the relational, unchanging properties of "earlier than," "simultaneous with," and "later than" as basic. The tenseless theory thinks of the whole of reality as an atemporal matrix with time as the fourth dimension. An open, indeterminate future as contrasted with a closed, determinate past and present is only possible within a tensed theory. A clear introduction to contemporary philosophy of time is offered in Quentin Smith and L. Nathan Oaklander, *Time, Change and Freedom: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[98] *De malo* 16.7, Editio Leonina 23:315, lines 191–96.

From the discussion of angelic knowledge of the future, there follows an important consequence for the analysis of divine foreknowledge. In Aquinas's view, the causal or practical character of God's knowledge does not suffice by itself to explain God's foreknowledge of the future. The issue of time and eternity is equally important. (Fore-)knowledge not only depends on the knower and his cognitive power but also imposes a certain ontological requirement on the object known. The object must be knowable and determinate, which is not possible as long as it is future. In contrast to Aquinas's twofold explanation of God's foreknowledge, Bonaventure thinks that the one argument, that God's knowledge is causal and creative, is enough to account for his foreknowledge. As a consequence, in order to maintain the divine prerogative of foreknowing, Bonaventure has to say that the angels' knowledge is dependent upon the objects known, unlike God's.

In Aquinas's view, angels come to know new things and events with the progression of time. However, their knowledge increases by means of the same unchanging innate species. Only the extramental objects change in the sense that when they come into being, the species in the angelic mind are instantly assimilated to them, and they are consequently known through those species.[99] Aquinas gives the following example:

> If, for example, something was not yet a human being, the angel's intellect is not yet assimilated to it by means of the form [i.e., the innate species] of a human being which it has within itself. But when this thing begins to be a human being, the angel's intellect begins to be assimilated to it according to the same form, without any change with regard to that intellect.[100]

What has been said so far about the angels' knowledge of the future pertains only to their natural knowledge. In the beatific vision, they share to some extent in God's foreknowledge through the divine Word. They cannot know the whole future, but depending on their supernaturally perfected place in the angelic hierarchy, angels know a smaller or greater part of the future. In order to explain why angels do not know the whole future in the beatific vision, Aquinas argues that this would mean that angels, as finite creatures, would encompass or comprehend God's infinity.[101] Elsewhere, however, he insists that the human soul of Christ,

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[99] See, e.g., Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.9 ad 3, Editio Leonina 22/2:251; *De malo* 16.7 ad 6 and ad 9, Editio Leonina 23:316–17; and *Summa theologiae* 1a.57.3 ad 3.

[100] *De veritate* 8.9 ad 3, Editio Leonina 22/2:251.

[101] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.12 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:259, lines 133–40.

which surpasses the angels as the highest creature, does know supernaturally the whole of the actual future, although Christ's soul, like the angels, cannot comprehend the divine essence.[102] In other words, the argument from divine incomprehensibility does not seem decisive in denying the angels' supernatural knowledge of the whole future.

The argument from God's incomprehensibility appears to be conclusive with regard to the question of whether angels know all the possibilities that never were or will be realized. Only God comprehends his essence, fathoms the scope of his power, and knows the infinite number of unrealized possibilities by his "knowledge of simple understanding" (*scientia simplicis intelligentiae*). No creature, no angel, not even the soul of Christ can do that, whether by natural or by supernatural knowledge.[103]

4.4. *Angelic Knowledge of Private Thoughts*

Angels do not know the private thoughts or "secrets of the heart" of human beings or of fellow angels immediately, as these exist in the mind of that person. Again, such knowledge is a divine prerogative.[104] Bonaventure and Aquinas explain angels' ignorance of private thoughts as follows. What a person is actually thinking about is determined not by her nature, not by what she is, but rather by her free will. Through the innate species, angels have knowledge only of natural conditions, not of the movements of the will, which are independent from nature and subject only to God.[105] Indirectly, however, angels can know what a human being or another angel is actually thinking about, either because it is communicated to them voluntarily by the person, because of some bodily effects and signs in humans, or because of supernatural knowledge.[106] As regards the second possibility, one may think of bodily changes like an increased heart rate or certain facial expressions that can give away what a person is thinking.[107] However, knowledge of private thoughts in bodily effects

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[102] *De veritate* 8.4 co. and 20.4., Editio Leonina 22/2:231 and 22/2:581, lines 148–72.

[103] *De veritate* 8.4 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:231, lines 194–211.

[104] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.8.2.1.6, *Opera omnia* 2:232–34. Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.13, Editio Leonina 22/2:260–62; *Summa theologiae* 1a.57.4; *De malo* 16.8, Editio Leonina 23:318–22.

[105] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.8.2.1.6 ad 4 and ad 5, *Opera omnia* 2:234. Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.13 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:261–62.

[106] In contrast to Bonaventure, Aquinas mentions the first possibility only in connection with communication between angels, in *De veritate* 9.4 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:288–89. However, one might argue that it is necessary for a guardian angel that his protégé talk to him about his inner thoughts.

[107] In *De veritate* 8.13 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:261–62, lines 93–102, Aquinas also mentions spiritual effects as an indirect means for knowing private thoughts. The remarkable

remains general and vague: for example, both thinking about one's dearest friend and thinking about one's worst enemy can increase one's blood pressure.[108]

As in knowledge of future contingents, here too there is not a fundamental, only a gradual, difference between humans and angels. And again, the only qualitative difference is that angelic knowledge is non-discursive: they know private thoughts in and not from corporeal effects.[109]

4.5. *Angelic Knowledge and the Mysteries of Grace*

The last kind of objects, the mysteries of faith, are discussed only briefly in a few texts by Aquinas.[110] By their natural cognition, angels cannot know the mysteries of grace, because these depend solely on God's will. Supernaturally, in the divine Word, at least some general knowledge of the mystery of Christ's incarnation has been directly revealed to all angels from the very beginning. God's motive for this revelation is that Christ's incarnation is "a certain universal principle to which all of the angels' tasks (*officia*) are ordered."[111]

Next, the angels can learn more about the mysteries of faith in two ways. First, higher angels, who penetrate more deeply into the divine Word and therefore know more and higher mysteries, can share their greater knowledge with lower angels through illumination, either from the very beginning or later in time.[112] Second, even the highest angels come to know specific details of the mysteries of faith as these mysteries unfold in the course of history, such as the exact place, time, and circumstances of Christ's passion.

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example he gives is that an angel can naturally know the increase or decrease of merit in the state of the soul as a consequence of what a person actually is thinking.

[108] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.13 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:262.

[109] Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.15 ad 4 and ad 7, Editio Leonina 22/2:270. By analogy with angelic knowledge of future contingencies in their causes, one might extend Aquinas's line of reasoning and claim that angelic knowledge of private thoughts in their effects is only conjectural. This would refute the counter-argument of the zombie possibility, in which there is a corporeal phenomenon without the usual corresponding inner state. This argument is brought forward by Martin Lenz in defense of Ockham's criticisms against the theory that angelic knowledge is non-discursive; see his "Why Can't Angels Think Properly?" 162–63.

[110] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.11.2.4, ed. Mandonnet, 2:288–91; *Summa theologiae* 1a.57.5; *Lectura super Ephesios* 3 nn. 160–62, ed. Cai, 40–41.

[111] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.57.5 ad 1.

[112] Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.11.2.2 co., ed. Mandonnet, 2:284–85.

Conclusion

Both Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas try to recast traditional Christian ideas about angels and angelic knowledge in view of the newly discovered Arab-Aristotelian theories of knowledge. There are two lines along which they develop their speculations about the knowledge of angels. First, the knowledge of purely spiritual beings must be distinguished from the knowledge of corporeal humans. Second, the distinction between Creator and creature must absolutely be maintained. In distinguishing angels from humans, we may not deify the former. Spiritual as they may be, angels remain creatures. Focusing on their creaturely status offers the opportunity to rethink in what terms we should articulate how the divine differs from the non-divine. It also provides a specific angle from which to think about the relationship between the natural and supernatural perfections of created intellectual beings.

The comparison I made between Bonaventure's and Aquinas's theories of angelic knowledge shows that the latter is more elaborate, systematic, coherent, fundamental, and creative. Aquinas revises Aristotle's metaphysical and epistemological concepts in a fundamental and creative way, while Bonaventure does not really manage to go beyond Aristotle's conceptual framework. For Bonaventure, the Aristotelian distinction between matter and form (spirit) remains the basic, normal paradigm for the composition of act and potency, as is clear from his universal hylomorphism. Aquinas, however, reinterprets the act-potency distinction analogously, so that it transcends the distinction between matter and form (spirit) and can be transferred to the non-material domain. In this way, spiritual reality is made subject to act-potency composition. This, I think, is the main reason why Bonaventure's theory of angelic knowledge is less convincing than Aquinas's, both in distinguishing angelic from human knowledge and in distinguishing angelic from divine knowledge.

For Bonaventure, the differences between angelic and human knowledge are not very significant. He thinks that angels have a possible and an agent intellect, like humans, and that the innate species of the angelic mind are not essentially different from the abstracted intelligible species in the human intellect. For Aquinas, however, the innate species in angels are of an entirely different nature from human intelligible species, in particular because the angelic species also contain knowledge of concrete individuals as such. He succeeds better in making clear the extent to which human intellectual knowledge remains imbued with its material origins and preconditions. Our intellect is only the weakest form of

intellectuality, because it is inextricably related to and permeated by our bodily existence and our corporeal senses. The imprint of the permanent sensory basis is found in all activities and products of the human intellect: the loss of knowledge of concrete individuality in our universal concepts, the inner composition of our propositions, and the discursiveness of our reasonings. All these elements are not characteristic of intellectuality *per se*, only of human intellectuality.

As to the distinction between creaturely, angelic knowledge and uncreated, divine knowledge, the most conspicuous difference between Bonaventure and Aquinas seems to be that Aquinas's account of divine foreknowledge requires two elements, viz., the practical character of God's knowledge *and* God's eternity, while Bonaventure thinks the former is sufficient by itself. This difference has to do with Aquinas's explanation of potentiality within the domain of spiritual, non-material reality: the succession of angelic thoughts and of cognitive acts constitutes a form of potentiality independent from matter, and it establishes a form of time so that angels are subject to the temporal modalities of past, present, and future. Given the indeterminateness and unknowability of the future as such, the future is only knowable for a knower that transcends the order of past, present, and future: God in his eternity.

DUNS SCOTUS ON ANGELIC KNOWLEDGE

Timothy B. Noone

At least two fundamental questions strike the medieval theorist of angelic cognition, as well as the modern reader of such theories. First, the object of angelic intelligence: What is it, and does the angelic intellect have intrinsic limitations in reference to it? Usually, this aspect of the discussion is muted, and one needs to infer the likely view of a given author from hints given. Normally, a medieval author will presume that the proper object of angelic intelligence is being as such or the totality of what is real inasmuch as angels are universally understood to be pure non-sense-dependent intellects.[1] Second, what are the mechanics or means for angelic intelligence? This is the question upon which the authors spend most of their time and efforts.

Answering this question is generally understood as a kind of speculative exercise in angelic psychology, and, hence, appeals often are made to analogies and disanalogies with human cognitive faculties. The means for angelic intelligence are often sorted out, however, in terms of the range of material objects (that is, particular objects of cognition) thought to be within the purview of angelic intelligence: the angels' understanding of themselves; their understanding of other things (whether other angels or the sensible created world inferior to them, including potentially infinite individuals); and their understanding of God through their natural powers. Natural angelic knowledge of God is distinct from the knowledge that the unfallen or good angels have of God through the grace bestowed upon them, thanks to their primal choice to love God above all else. Concerning each of these more particular objects, authors will differ regarding whether they think the same or different means are needed to explain angelic understanding in its various forms. In their treatments of the second type of object (the essences of created things generally), for example, some authors propose that intelligible species, or representational proxies, are needed, while also maintaining no such species are needed for

[1] For a typical view, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.55.1 co.: "Potentia autem intellectiva angeli se extendit ad intelligendum omnia: quia obiectum intellectus est ens vel verum commune."

the angels to understand themselves because the angelic intelligence is already cognitively present to itself simply as it exists. In their treatment of angelic knowledge of individuals in the material world, authors may at times argue for limitations to the range of angelic intelligence, either in denying angels' access to individuals as such or in denying that the angelic understanding extends to the particular thoughts and the intimate wishes of human individuals, known to the medievals as the "secrets of the heart."

Why is any of this of properly philosophical interest? The case of the angels presents a philosopher with a case of a pure intelligence, one not bound by the limitations of sense information, but nonetheless a finite intelligence requiring causal processes or a specific set of conditions to account for its knowledge. Hence, exploring the topic of angelic knowledge gives a philosopher the opportunity to reflect, through contrasts with the angelic case, on the limits set on human understanding by sense and imagination. The case of angelic cognition is also distinct from, though instructive in regard to, God's knowledge. Divine knowledge involves conceptual difficulties, thanks to the divine infinity and simplicity that do not hamper angelic knowledge. Furthermore, the angels allow philosophers to focus on the means or processes of properly intellectual, as opposed to sensory, cognition. If a given philosopher thinks that, in the case of human understanding, intelligible species are needed, such a philosopher has a chance to determine what role the species plays in bringing about and specifying intellectual cognition when the preliminary act of abstraction is, as is usually claimed in the angelic case, not needed. Finally, issues of intellectual cognition bearing upon actually existing things as such are raised by the discussion of angelic cognition. If, as one prominent theory of angelic intelligence holds, all angelic knowledge of finite realities apart from self-knowledge transpires through species that represent kinds or individuals, how does acquaintance with such species yield information that lets an angel know what is the case at a given moment of time? If species-based knowledge is wholesalely indifferent to time and place because abstract, what is not clear is whether it is sufficient to explain the totality of angelic knowledge, which must extend to acquaintance with existents as existents and entities in time. If all knowledge about existents is supposed to be brought about through inborn species, and if angels have knowledge of the past and of the present although not of the future, then what brings it about that the species of a present state of affairs gets "actualized," so to speak, so as to represent that state of affairs?

What I propose to treat in the present essay is the theory of angelic cognition advanced by Duns Scotus. Studying Scotus's views has several advantages for coming to understand the key issues in the later medieval discussion of angelic knowledge. First, Scotus reviews and criticizes the two main authors whose views remained the touchstone for most medieval theologians' treatments of angelic cognition: Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent. Second, Scotus's own objections and concerns regarding the two most prominent theories were shared by other theologians of the fourteenth century and, hence, give us insight into the problems arising from the commonly received account. Third, and most important, Scotus's own theory of angelic cognition uses his distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition; thus, examining his theory allows us to see how this fundamental distinction between modes of cognition, so characteristic of late medieval psychology, arises out of and impacts upon received theories of angelic cognition.[2]

In my discussion of Scotus's own views, I shall privilege Scotus's Parisian treatment of the theory of angelic cognition (*Reportationes Parisienses*), for several reasons: first, depending on the exact dating of the corresponding portion of the *Ordinatio*, it may be the latest general treatment in Scotus's corpus; second, it has a different order for presenting the questions, an order that seems more conducive to our manner of inquiry, since it places knowledge of the other prior to knowledge of self; and, lastly, it treats explicitly an issue not discussed elsewhere, that is, the question of whether or not angelic knowledge can progress or improve. The issues raised by this question, as we shall see, require Scotus to apply his distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition in a way that brings to fruition a distinction first canvassed by Bonaventure in his Commentary on the *Sentences*.

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[2] A good example of the way in which the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition eventually controls the discussion is found in William of Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.12–13, ed. Gedeon Gál and Rega Wood (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1981), *Opera theologica* 5:56–77. After posing two traditional questions (whether angels understand through species and whether higher angels understand through fewer species than lower ones), Ockham proceeds to organize his entire presentation around the topics of intuitive and abstractive cognition. For a concise study of Scotus's and Ockham's theories of angelic knowledge, see Dominik Perler, "Thought Experiments: The Methodological Function of Angels in Late Medieval Epistemology," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), 143–53.

As a result, the order of the issues to be considered is: angelic knowledge of other creatures (section 1); angelic self-knowledge (section 2); angelic distinct (and natural) knowledge of God (section 3); and angelic progress in natural knowledge (section 4). The chapter will close with reflections about Scotus's inventiveness (section 5). The *Lectura* and *Ordinatio* begin the discussion of angelic knowledge with angelic self-knowledge, continue with angelic knowledge of God, and end with a consideration of angelic knowledge of other creatures. The order of presentation in the Oxford teaching seems similar to that followed in Giles of Rome's work on angelic knowledge and has resonances with the discussion of angelic knowledge in Aquinas's *De veritate*.[3] The Parisian work, in contrast, seems to follow an order akin to that found in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. Furthermore, we should note the wording of Scotus's question regarding angelic knowledge of other created things: he does not simply ask whether an angel knows things other than itself through its essence (in the manner of Giles of Rome), but rather precisely whether an angel knows created essences through the proper and distinct means of knowing such essences. Here Scotus is building into his question the scope he needs to discuss the mechanics of angelic cognition in general, while hinting that his own approach to issues of angelic cognition will lay emphasis on the need for an isomorphic relationship between the representational proxy and the object known.

1. *Angelic Knowledge of Other Creatures*

The opening arguments for Scotus's discussion of the first question arrange the problematic clearly. Based upon the hierarchy of angelic substances,

[3] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* (Venice, 1503; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968) q. 1: "Utrum angelus intelligat se per essentiam suam," 76rb–78vb; q. 2: "Utrum angelus intelligat alia a se per essentiam suam," 78vb–80va; q. 3: "Utrum angelus possit intelligere se ipsum et alia a se per essentiam aliorum," 80va–81vb; q. 4: "Utrum species vel habitus naturalis sit illud per quod angelus intelligit alia a se," 81vb–86ra. Giles's list of questions was somewhat influenced by Aquinas's list in his *De veritate* q. 8, Editio Leonina (Rome, 1882ff.) 22:215: a. 1: "Utrum angeli videant Deum per essentiam"; a. 2: "Utrum intellectus angeli vel hominis beati essentiam divinam comprehendat"; a. 3: "Utrum angelus ex propriis naturalibus potuerit pertingere ad videndum Deum per essentiam"; a. 4: "Utrum angelus videns Deum per essentiam omnia cognoscat"; a. 5: "Utrum visio rerum in Verbo sit per aliquas similitudines rerum in intellectu angelico existentes"; a. 6: "Utrum angelus cognoscat se ipsum"; a. 7: "Utrum angelus unus intelligat alium"; a. 8: "Utrum angelus res materiales cognoscat per formas aliquas an per essentiam sui cognoscentis"; a. 9: "Utrum formae per quas angeli cognoscunt res materiales sint innatae vel a rebus acceptae."

someone might think that the angels higher up within the hierarchy contain in their natures the properties of the lower angels and, hence, that they would not require, apart from their own essences, proper means of knowledge for knowing lower things. Given the intellectual and immaterial nature of angels and the excellence this entails, someone might suppose that an angel would be incapable of cognitively receiving the form of a body into itself so as to exercise knowledge, on the grounds that the species of a body is even less perfect than the body itself, whereas the angel is so perfect that nothing constitutive of, let alone less noble than, a body would feature as part of the angel's own perfection.[4] An opposing consideration based upon a commonly held opinion is that even God requires distinct means of knowledge, commonly known as the divine ideas, to have distinct knowledge of creatures.[5]

1.1. *Henry of Ghent's Cognitive Habit*

In laying out the background for his own views, Scotus summarizes Henry of Ghent's position as well as that of Thomas Aquinas. Rejecting impressed intelligible species both in the case of human beings and in the case of angels, Henry posits instead as a means of cognition what he terms a *habitus scientialis*.[6] This type of habit should be viewed along the lines suggested by Henry's analogy. Just as a human being may acquire, through a lengthy psychological process involving repeated acts of the same sort, a habit of, say, geometry, whereby she may spontaneously and at will engage in geometrical analysis and proof, so an angel has the same facility to think at will the many objects that are present to his intellect through

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[4] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.2, Oxford, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 134v: "Item res immaterialis perfectior est re corporali, ergo et specie corporis repraesentante corpus. Ergo nulla species corporis potest esse perfectio angeli; ergo non per speciem propriam intelligitur corpus"; *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 n. 310, Editio Vaticana 18:330; *Ordinatio* 2.3.2.3 n. 352, Editio Vaticana 7:570.

[5] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 134v: "Oppositum: intellectus divinus cognoscit alia a se per distinctas rationes cognoscendi et proprias, quia ad hoc ponuntur ideae secundum Augustinum 83 Quaestionum q. 46, quia si cognoscit aliquid extra se, oportet quod cognoscat illud obiectum per propriam rationem illius obiecti; ergo si cognoscat aliud obiectum quod non continebitur eminenter in illo, oportet quod per aliam rationem propriam cognoscat illud. Igitur multo magis quilibet intellectus inferior." See also Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 n. 316, Editio Vaticana 18:332; and *Ordinatio* 2.3.2.3 n. 354, Editio Vaticana 7:571.

[6] What Henry rejects are impressed intelligible species, just as he rejects the standard account of impressed species as these apply to the sense powers. See Michael Rombeiro, "Intelligible Species in the Mature Thought of Henry of Ghent," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 49 (2011): 181–220.

the habit in question. The disanalogous feature is that the angelic habit is not produced through a complex and lengthy process involving distinct mental acts but is created along with the angelic nature and present at the very outset of its cognitive life. Still, this view of angelic cognition is rendered plausible because of the place angels occupy in the hierarchy of substances: the highest perfection of the lower reality borders upon the features of higher realities.[7] In this case, the highest cognitive capacities of human beings, which are fully developed intellectual habits, border on and point to the condition of angels, but the latter have the habits in a much more perfect way.[8]

In Scotus's reconstruction, Henry's position lays emphasis on a key point.[9] The relationship between the habit and the items known through the habit is more direct and necessary than the putatively causal relationship holding between the species and the object, because the habit is essentially related to the object in a way that the species is not. To make this clear, let us take some examples. In terms of the relationship between habit and content, the ability to reason about geometry on a moment's notice (which is, for medieval psychologists, the habit of geometry) or to play the piano (the musical habit of piano playing) is essentially and directly related to geometrical forms or musical expressions on the piano,

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[7] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.14, ed. Badius (Paris, 1518), 177rQ: "... ut sic semper inferiora in supremo suo connexa sunt infimo superiorum et quae in inferiori sunt secundum maiorem compositionem et potentialitatem, sunt in superiori secundum maiorem simplicitatem et maiorem actualitatem; quae omnia finaliter concurrunt in primam et perfectissimam unitatem et actualitatem." Cf. Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 134v. Henry employs a commonly used Dionysian principle; see Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus* 7.3, ed. Beate Regina Suchla, Corpus Dionysiacum 1, Patristische Texte und Studien 33 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 198, lines 15–20.

[8] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.14, ed. Badius, 177rO: "Cumque perfectus fuerit intellectus noster per habitus scientiales omnium eorum quae per ipsum nata sunt cognosci et actu ea intelligit ex habitu, hoc est perfectius et summum ad quod potest pervenire ex puris naturalibus et secundum statum vitae praesentis; sed est infimum in intellectu angelico. Ipse enim habet habitum scientialem omnium rerum naturaliter a se cognoscibilium naturaliter sibi innatum, quasi secundum modum et cursum rei generatae naturaliter, non secundum modum et cursum scientiarum ab intellectu nostro acquisitarum." Ibid.: "... in quo in suo imo coniungitur noster intellectus idem apprehendendo absque condicionibus illis singularibus, cuius est perfectio informatio secundum habitus scientiales; quibus tamen se ipso non potest deduci in actu absque apprehensione intelligibilis in phantasmate, ut dictum est. Et tunc est in suo summo, cum secundum illos habitus intelligibilia abstracta actu intelligit. Quod est imum cum angelis. Ipsi enim obiecta non sumunt abstracta ab aliis, sed habitus scientiales habent in se naturaliter, quibus ex se procedunt in actu de potentia ..."

[9] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 134v.

respectively. In contrast, what links a species to its object seems to be not such a relation to content, but rather a causal derivation. Henry reasons, accordingly, that just as it would be impossible to have the habits in question without being concomitantly aware of that of which they are the habit, the angels cannot fail to know the items to which the habit is related through their acquaintance with the habit, which is concreated with their nature.

It is important to note, too, that Henry assigns a single intellectual habit, and only a single intellectual habit, to cover the full range of what is naturally available to each angelic intelligence. That is to say, Henry differs from Aquinas and others not simply in preferring to call the angels' cognitive devices "habits" rather than "species" but also in the maximal economy he achieves in allowing for a single habit to cover all naturally known intelligibles. Furthermore, the will plays a role in angelic cognition, since the order of angelic thinking is not tied to laws of association in the imagination, or sequences of sense experiences, or even inferences from one thing to another, as is the case in human beings. Rather, in the case of angelic cognition, the passage from one state to another arises from the habit under the command of the angelic will.[10] Finally, Henry claims that habits can become more and more intense so as to cover more intelligibles (even, in principle, an infinite number). In that respect, they are akin to intellectual habits developed in humans, because we, too, may understand something at will even without a species, simply by relying on the habit to think about certain objects.[11] The habit and the angel's will allow, accordingly, a sequence of thoughts within the angelic intelligence, but not one that is patterned by principles of association, as in the sequence of thought in Humean psychology, for angels lack imagination, the principle behind Hume's sequence.

Scotus's first objection to Henry's views is concerned with the final point mentioned. If the habits proposed by Henry as the means for angelic

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[10] Henry, *Quodl.* 5.14, ed. Badius, 177rR: "Et tunc demum cum actus perfectus est in habitu primo, libero voluntatis imperio, ex habitu discurrit ad singula, tam complexa quam incomplexa, cognoscenda; discursu dico quo cognoscitur hoc post hoc, non hoc ex hoc, qualis est in nobis. . . "

[11] Henry, *Quodl.* 5.14, ed. Badius, 179rE–F: "Praeterea quod arguebatur de infinitate specierum quae simul essent intellectui angelico impressae: illud nullo modo est contra positionem de habitu, quoniam habitus unicus est non determinatus ad aliquod obiectum, virtute tamen in se habens singula. Ita quod si essent infinitae species et essentiae creaturarum, unico habitu sufficeret intelligere singulas, et in infinitum procedendo unam post aliam: et hoc tanto expeditius et limpidius singula intelligendo: quanto habitus simplicior fuerit et minus determinatus in natura et essentia sua."

knowledge really were able to cover an infinite number of objects, then they would have to be intensively infinite, a property Scotus claims belongs to God alone.[12] Second, Scotus rejects the necessary bond between the habits and the objects of which they are supposed to convey knowledge. According to Scotus, the angelic intellect can grasp the habits themselves, without grasping the things to which they are related, since the habits may be taken just in themselves, that is, as qualities, and hence non-referentially.[13] A related point is that Scotus does not understand how the analogy with human intellectual habits is supposed to work. In the human case, the habits cannot, taken by themselves, present or re-present the object, even though they are caused partially by the object. Instead, other psychological causes, such as images in the imagination (and, for Scotus, intelligible species) must be concurrent with the habit to produce the requisite acts of awareness.[14] Were habits sufficient, the habits themselves could, even in humans, present the objects to which they are related, but this is simply not the case.[15] One final objection reflects Scotus's own concern to distinguish natural from voluntary causes. If the disposition of the habit proposed as the vehicle for angelic knowledge really were subject to the will of the angel, that would involve an utter confusion between the orders of nature (which is deterministic) and will (which is free), according to Scotus. In fact, if the disposition to present objects in various sequences is part of the habit, it is an item of nature and does not flow from or depend upon the angelic will, any more than the disposition of a stone to move downwards depends upon any finite will.[16]

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[12] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 134v: "... contra hoc quod dicitur quod iste habitus sufficeret ad perfecte intelligendum: si possent esse infinitae species intelligentiarum vel quidditatum, quia ubi pluralitas concludit perfectionem intensive; infinitas includit infinitatem intensive. Sed si tantum ista res cognoscitur perfecte, aliqua virtus intensive requiritur ad cognoscendum. Ergo si aliqua una virtus cognoscit aeque perfecte hanc rem et illam sicut alia virtus cognoscit unam tantum; maior erit intensive illa virtus qua cognoscuntur duo distincte quam qua unum tantum, quia oportet quod contineat illas duas quidditates vel formaliter vel eminenter. Non potest formaliter si remaneat una; igitur eminenter. Sed si continet infinitas quidditates eminenter, erit infinitae virtutis intensive." See also his *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 nn. 334–36, Editio Vaticana 18:339–40; and *Ordinatio* 2.3.2.3 n. 36, Editio Vaticana 7:579–80.

[13] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 134v–135r.

[14] Scotus distinguishes sharply between two stages of intellectual activity leading to an occurrent thought: in the first, the agent intellect cooperates with the phantasm belonging to the imagination to produce an intelligible species in the possible intellect; in the second, the agent intellect cooperates with the intelligible species to produce an actual thought.

[15] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 135r.

[16] Ibid.

1.2. *Aquinas's Hierarchical* Species Intelligibiles

Though the opinion of Thomas Aquinas is not discussed in the *Reportationes Parisienses* in connection with the question of angelic knowledge of other created things, Thomas's opinion is the object of discussion in the parallel treatment found in the *Ordinatio* and the *Lectura*. Regarding the vehicle or means for conveying angelic knowledge, Scotus and Aquinas are in agreement: they both posit species to explain angelic knowledge of other created things. Aquinas, however, wants to claim, following Neoplatonic principles found in such sources as the *Liber de causis* and Pseudo-Dionysius, that the angels at a higher place in the hierarchy need fewer species than those lower in the hierarchy. The reasoning behind this claim is that the closer an intelligence is to the First, the more powerful, more immaterial, and more actual its intellect is; and the more powerful, more immaterial, and more actual its intellect is, the more perfect its means of knowing.[17]

To Scotus's mind, Aquinas's delinkage of the species from what it represents, so that fewer and fewer psychological proxies come to represent more and more entities, entails a serious problem and means that Aquinas's position comes closer to Henry's than we might think. In this regard, the *Lectura* presents us with a text indicating Scotus's efforts to get Aquinas's theory correctly in view, even if he ultimately aims to align it with Henry's. Scotus reports an interpretation of Aquinas's teaching found in William de la Mare's *Correctorium*, according to which Thomas's argument that there are fewer intelligible species among angels placed further up the hierarchy is taken to mean that, like a more general genus, the species becomes wider and wider in its extension, logically speaking. Scotus thinks this reading of Aquinas is ill founded. Instead, he interprets Aquinas, probably more correctly, as intending that the species in the higher angels is more powerful as an instrument and contains more intelligibles virtually, not that it simply becomes wider in eidetic extension. On Scotus's reading, then, Aquinas is holding that the species in the angels placed higher in the hierarchy are metaphysically individual entities but represent ever greater numbers of things, at least virtually.[18]

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[17] Thomas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.55.3 co. Cf. Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 nn. 325–29, Editio Vaticana 18:336–37; and *Ordinatio* 2.3.2.3 n. 354, Editio Vaticana 7:571.

[18] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 n. 331, Editio Vaticana 18:337–38: "Hoc sequitur sic: non intelligit ipse qui dicit hanc opinionem, quod angelus superior intelligat per speciem magis universalem secundum praedicationem, ut sic esset dare quod per speciem generis generalissimi intelligat omnia alia a se (sicut aliqui arguunt contra ipsum),—sed

The ultimate implication, however, of even Scotus's more charitable reading of Aquinas is that Aquinas is committed, in principle, to the possibility of a highest angel needing only one species (and, hence, is subject to the same lines of criticism that Scotus employs against Henry's single habit theory).[19] His disconnection between species and the intelligible features they represent, moreover, means that there is no longer an isomorphic relationship between them. Regarding the former point, Scotus claims that Aquinas would have to allow that a maximally high angel would know so effectively through the species he possessed that he could always know still one more intelligible item and, hence, an infinity of items. But, once again, this would mean a habit of intensive infinity and would require infinite being for its foundation, contrary to the nature of any creature.[20] In regard to the latter point, Scotus insists that as a representational entity, the means of knowing—whether it is a species or a habit—must be related to the thing of which it causes knowledge as an item measured is related to a measure. Hence, its distinctiveness and

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vult quod illa species sit species singularis, per quam angelus superior cognoscit, sed est universalis secundum potestatem suam, ita quod ex actualitate sua plura repraesentat; et ideo ponit quod sit species non adaequata (sicut est essentia divina cognoscendi omnia); sed non 'adaequata ratio,'—aliter enim esset sibi ipsi (sicut accipitur angelus infimus, qui ponitur cognoscere quiditates per tot species quot quiditates)." The reference to William de la Mare is supplied by the Vatican editors as William de la Mare, *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, In Primam partem a. 20, in Palémon Glorieux, *Les premières polémiques thomistes: I.–Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quare"* (Le Saulchoir, Kain: Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, 1927), 87–88. For further details on Aquinas's position, see the discussion in Harm Goris's chapter in this volume, "Angelic Knowledge in Aquinas and Bonaventure," section 2.1.

[19] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 n. 331, Editio Vaticana 18:338: "Ascendatur ad superiores angelos (qui ascensus per eos non dicitur, sed species dicunt in universo diversas): quanto ascenditur in species superiores angeli, tanto deminuitur in speciebus repraesentativis; igitur tandem devenietur ad angelum qui cognoscet omnia per unam speciem (quia, forte, sunt plures angeli quam numerus quiditatum, iuxta illud Dan.: Milia milium etc.),—vel si non sit talis, fiat aliquis, et ille cognoscat per unam speciem, ita quod non cognoscet tot per illam speciem quin possit plura cognoscere."

[20] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 n. 334, Editio Vaticana 18:339: "Hoc probatur: Primo sic: quando pluralitas numeralis requirit perfectionem intensiorem, infinitas numeralis requirit perfectionem infinitam (sicut si 'posse facere plura' sit maioris virtutis quam posse facere unum, tunc posse facere infinita erit infinitae virtutis); sed per primam opinionem—ad quam reducitur secunda—non tot quiditates repraesentat habitus in angelo, quin plura possit repraesentare: ideo dicit expresse quod si essent infinitae quiditates et essentiae, ille habitus in mente angeli sufficeret ut 'una ratio' ad repraesentandum omnia. Sed pluralitas ex parte obiectorum distincte repraesentatorum concludit perfectionem intensiorem in habitu, ut probabitur. Igitur si ille habitus habet virtutem repraesentandi non tot quin plura (et infinita, si essent), sequitur quod ille habitus sit infinitae virtutis."

specificity is required for the resulting knowledge itself to be distinct and directed towards a given object.[21]

1.3. *Scotus's View: One Species per Intelligible*

Scotus's own position is that there are as many intelligible species in the angelic intellect covering created items other than the angel as there are such intelligibles to know, no matter how high an angel is in the hierarchy. He is not particularly concerned whether one calls them species or habits, though he thinks the latter term less preferable. The species in the angelic intellect are permanent qualities rather like habits, but since they are isomorphic with the items known, being measured by the latter, and function in a way analogous to the way that intelligible species function in the case of the human mind, he thinks species are what such cognitive devices should be called.[22]

2. *Angelic Self-Knowledge*

The standard arguments against the possibility of angelic self-knowledge are reducible to three principal points. First, the presence and actual intelligibility of the angelic essence to the angelic mind are insufficient to guarantee actual self-knowledge, as may be seen in analogy to the human being for whom the presence of the soul does not allow direct self-awareness. Second, the metaphysical principle that nothing can act upon itself or be a patient in reference to itself rules out angelic self-knowledge, since the latter would involve the angel moving itself from potency to act. Finally, claiming that an angel could know itself through its own essence might mean identifying the angelic essence with its activity, a feature believed to belong to God alone.[23]

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[21] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 nn. 343–44, Editio Vaticana 18:343.

[22] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 135r–v: "Secundo dico quod istae rationes cognoscendi in intellectu <intellectum M> possunt dici habitus in universali et per accidens, quia sunt de difficili mobiles et de numero permanentium; in speciali tamen et proprie dicuntur species intelligibiles quia habitus ille qui distinguitur a specie est proprie habitus acquisitus ex actibus. Nunc autem species superior non potest perfecte continere inferiorem nisi potentia quod essentia cuius est species contineat essentiam cuius est alia species. Ideo contradictio est speciem superiorem continere inferiorem et essentiam superiorem non continere essentiam inferiorem." Cf. his *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 nn. 343–50, Editio Vaticana 18:343–45.

[23] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 135v–136r.

2.1. *Henry on Angelic Self-Knowledge by Means of a Cognitive Habit*

Scotus considers aspects of both Henry of Ghent's and Thomas Aquinas's theories of self-cognition in this connection. Henry's proposal, an extension of his general views on angelic cognition seen above, is that an angel knows itself through the single concreated habit that the Flemish doctor assigns as the instrument of knowledge in each angel. The reasoning of Henry seems, to Scotus's mind, to rely on the idea that the angel knows only types through the habit and, hence, is aware of no one particular falling under a given type. Applying this general feature of Henry's account of angelic knowledge to the specific case of angelic self-knowledge, one arrives at the result that an angel cannot know itself except as falling under a general concept.[24]

Scotus's initial reaction to this position suggests that it derogates from the dignity of the angelic mind and renders it less noble than the human mind. For, if the angelic intellect really cannot understand without a habit provided to it uniquely by God, this would seem to mean that the angel would be incapable of understanding anything, were it bereft of that habit, even if it exercised its intellectual power to the utmost and all creaturely natural causes and principles cooperated with it. But, Scotus objects, even the human mind is capable of understanding if it enjoys the cooperation of the pertinent created causes. Hence, the Henrician theory threatens, in Scotus's eyes, to place angels lower than humans, rendering their intellectual powers inert: "Ergo iste intellectus non ponitur nisi sicut lapis" (therefore, this intellect is claimed to be [as bereft of understanding] as a stone).[25]

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[24] See, for example, Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 5.14, ed. Badius, 178vX: "... propter quod per se et primo intellectus angelicus sicut neque noster nullam essentiam aut naturam particularem intelligit, etiam nec suam essentiam, nisi sub sua specie sub ratione universali. Et quo ad hoc non aliter intelligit iste angelus singularis istam essentiam suam singularem: quam essentiam singularem illius alterius angeli. Immo species sua universalis cognita a se obiective, est sibi ratio et medium cognoscendi suam essentiam singularem obiective: sicut et quaelibet alia species est sibi ratio cognoscendi quaecumque singularia sub ipsa: ut ipse angelus sibiipsi intelligibilis sit: et intelligit suam essentiam sicut et alia intelligibilia et non aliter." Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 136r: "Et tunc dicitur quod essentia angeli non intelligitur per essentiam nisi ut relucet in habitu isto, quia si ista essentia esset per se sine tali habitu, nunquam intelligeretur ab angelo, tamen potest nunc angelus intelligere se per essentiam ut relucet in habitu et sic uniformiter intelligit se sicut alia, quia intelligit alia per essentiam ut relucent in habitu. Ad hoc adducitur ratio: intellectus angelicus nullum particulare primo intelligit, igitur non intelligit se primo ut in se, cum sic sit quaedam essentia singularis, ergo intelligit primo ut relucet in habitu sub ratione universalis."

[25] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 136r.

Closely connected with his expression of dissatisfaction with the impact of the theory on angelic nobility is Scotus's questioning of its efficacy and adequacy. If the habit is the precise source of the intelligibility of the angel, then it seems God Himself would be incapable of understanding the angel unless the habit was present.[26] Furthermore, the habit would have to encompass within itself incompatible features: in order to represent the quiddity of a specific type, namely, the angelic type, the habit would have to represent a content indeterminate to actual existence and, thus, of no epistemic value for knowing the singular angel with its determinate properties. One might argue, of course, that the representation involves all determinate properties, including existence, for any given quiddity, but this would seem to mean that an angelic intellect would naturally know future contingents as well as general features—though allowing that angels naturally know future contingents was widely regarded as theologically unacceptable.[27] The best that Scotus can allow for Henry's theory—i.e., that through the cognitive device of a habit the angel knows its specific nature and then itself as partaking that nature—is that this theory might describe a sequence of angelic knowledge in the order of time: the angel knows the universal prior to knowing itself as a singular. Still, Scotus insists, this does not preclude the angel's knowing itself directly in its proper singularity, while the habit would only allow, strictly speaking, the angel to know the universalizable aspects of its own essence.[28]

2.2. *Aquinas on Angelic Self-Knowledge without a Species*

Having discarded Henry's theory of angelic self-knowledge, Scotus turns to Aquinas's account. According to Scotus, Thomas's theory of angelic self-knowledge revolves around two principles: first, the distinction between transitive and immanent action; and second, the distinction between a cognitive power enjoying actual knowledge as opposed to potential knowledge. Aquinas argues that the essence of an angel may function as the means for angelic self-knowledge, since it is always present to the angelic intellect. The idea that the angelic essence may function in exactly this way even for the angel to whom that essence belongs is grounded on two comparisons. First, the angelic essence functions as a source of intelligibility to another angel, allowing the latter to know it, so there seems

[26] Ibid.
[27] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 136r–v.
[28] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 136v.

no reason why it should not do the same for the angel itself. Second, a physical nature such as heat causes its necessary effect of heating even if it were, *per impossibile*, separated from the fire to which it belongs; and by analogy, the angelic essence ought to do the same in regard to intelligibility. (To understand this analogy properly, we have to bear in mind that in medieval physics, heat is a quality that is distinct from the heat-source, in this case fire, even if every actual occurrence of the heat source has as one of its concomitant properties, heat. The quality of heat would communicate itself quite apart from the original source, if it could be separated from it.) Aquinas's point is that, if the angelic nature would cause knowledge in a suitable causally related intellect, such as the intellect of another angel, then it ought to produce the same effect with regard to itself. Furthermore, if we consider that immanent activities in general occur whenever the object is united to the agent, and that the essence of the angel is always united to the angel, we may easily reach the conclusion that the angel will cognize itself through the immanent activity of self-understanding. Finally, Aquinas argues that the requirement of a species is tied to a knower's passing from potential to actual knowledge, whereas in the case of the angelic knower, no such transition is needed, since the conditions for its actual knowledge always obtain. Hence, the angel may directly cognize itself through its essence, without species or any further cognitive device such as a habit.[29]

Scotus's evaluation of the Thomistic position on angelic self-knowledge begins with a critical observation. If we attend to the analogy with heat, the heat itself does not function for its own coming into being or becoming hot, but for other things becoming hot. If the essence of the angel is to be considered analogous to the heat, the angelic essence must be such as to cause the angelic intellect to become directed towards the angel itself. But heat's activity, following the principles of Aristotelian physics, involves the communication of a form from the agent to the patient. Indeed, this must be the case if we bear in mind Aquinas's views on the relationship of the human soul to the human intellect, for, in his view, the latter is an ontologically distinct power. But this would entail, if we follow out the analogy, that angelic self-knowledge would also involve a

[29] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.56.1 co. For Scotus's summary, see *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 136r.

form informing the intellect, contrary to what seems to be the point of Aquinas's argumentation.[30]

Another objection lodged by Scotus against the Thomistic view has to do with the role of the species. Aquinas's theory seems to presume that the only role for the species is as a principle of actuation, that is, of rendering the intellect in a state of actuality as opposed to potentiality. But, Scotus objects, this overlooks the other dimension of cognitive determination, namely, the object's representation functioning as a formal cause specifying the cognitive act to precisely that object; this role for the species would still be relevant even for an intellect always in act.[31]

2.3. *Scotus's Account of Angelic Self-Knowledge*

In laying out his own position on angelic self-knowledge, Scotus focuses upon three key factors involved in cognition: the means of knowledge, the knowing subject, and the intelligible object. The means of knowledge is precisely understood in this context as the first actualization of the understanding that immediately precedes the act of understanding in the order of causation. If we think about the causal chain, for example, that leads from the visible object to the act of sight, the proximate cause or means of knowledge is the species of color as received into the organ of sight. On the side of the intelligible, the correlative to the means of knowledge in this precise sense is the ultimate disposition leading to the act of understanding. The intellect and the intelligible are concurring causes producing the act of understanding.[32]

Within this general framework, Scotus tries to locate the distinct features of angelic self-knowledge by reviewing features of human knowledge and indicating similarities and differences with the angelic case. An important distinction to be noted is that between intuitive and abstractive cognition. Scientific knowledge is, for example, necessarily abstractive, that is, it prescinds from the actual existence and presence of the objects; if this were not the case, science would cease each time the existing thing ceased to exist. Intuitive cognition, in contrast, bears upon things as actually

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[30] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 136v.

[31] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fols. 136v–137r.

[32] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 137r. For intellect and species as cooperating causes in the act of cognition, see Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 1.3.2.3 nn. 360–72, Editio Vaticana 16:366–70.

existent and is one of the human intellect's inherent capacities, however little or much we humans exercise intuitive cognition in the present life.

In reference to the factors involved in knowing, Scotus thinks that an angel can know itself through its essence, since the essence may serve as the means of knowing on the side of the intelligible. Just as in Aquinas's theory, the presence of the intelligible object suffices, and there is, accordingly, no need for the angelic intellect to be informed by some means of knowledge distinct from its essence.[33]

These elements of Scotus's theory seem, at first glance, to make his view the same as Aquinas's, and this explains why the Subtle Doctor is at pains to point out the ways in which his position differs. Scotus interprets the angelic essence as a principle of knowledge on the part of the intelligible, not on the part of the angelic intellect; that is to say, the essence of the angel in its presence to the angelic mind cooperates with that mind to produce the act of knowledge, whereas Aquinas does not articulate precisely—at least to Scotus's satisfaction—whether the essence is simply the term of the act of angelic cognition or acts as a cooperating cause in combination with the angelic mind. Second, the essence of the angel must function as the proper means of understanding, since no other created principle could allow the angel to be known so well, especially in regard to the essence of the angel in its singularity and presence. Here Scotus's difference from Aquinas seems to consist in his emphasis on an angel's mode of cognition being intuition. Third, the essence of the angel is even more perfect as a principle of knowledge than a species would be. After all, one angel can know another through species, and hence the other angel's essence produces a representational entity in intelligible being that allows it to be known on the part of the other angel; this must mean, however, that the intelligibility of an angel's essence, as the source of the species, must have even more intelligible being than the species and hence be more intelligible.[34]

Yet, these explanations of how his position differs from that of Aquinas also seem to compromise Scotus's own stand on intelligible species, for if the presence of the angelic essence is a more perfect expression of intelligibility than a species, dropping species from our account would seem preferable if the objects could be present in themselves. Here Scotus's rejoinder relies on the claim that the universal intelligible needs to

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[33] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 137r.
[34] Ibid.

have the property of universality prior to the act of understanding bearing upon a universal object. True, the representation of the object in the species remains a less perfect intelligible expression than the direct presence of the object and results in abstractive cognition, which is accordingly a less perfect mode of cognition. But abstractive cognition is nonetheless a legitimate form of cognition.[35]

Despite the fact that the angelic essence is a *per se* or proper means for the angel to know itself, it is not the precise cause of the angel's self-knowledge. This is clear on two grounds. First, if the essence were the precise means of knowledge, then the angel could not know anything other than itself through its essence, but Scotus maintains that this is false, since he thinks that higher angels actually could know other things through their essences. Second, if the essence of the angel is taken to be the precise cause of angelic self-knowledge, this leads to another problematic result: the angel could also know itself abstractly through a concept, in which case the angelic essence would not function as a principle of knowledge—instead, the concept would.[36]

In addressing the initial problems posed for angelic self-knowledge, Scotus claims that the analogy with the human mind and its inability to self-cognize fails to account for the impediment found in human knowledge whereby our intellects must first turn to phantasms prior to engaging in acts of understanding. Scotus agrees that, were it not for such a seemingly natural disposition, human minds would also self-cognize prior to engaging in other acts of understanding. As to the objection drawn from the claim that agent and patient need to be distinct, Scotus replies that the principle does not hold universally; there are clear counter-examples in the case of human and angelic acts of will, at least as Scotus would understand such acts, for in both the human and angelic cases the act of will comes from the power of the will which moves itself to its act.[37]

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[35] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 137r: "Dico quod universale intelligibile et intellectum praesupponit universalitatem in aliquo abstracto; sed in obiecto singulari non potest esse illa univeralitas praesupposita; ergo oportet quod sit in aliquo abstracto; et ideo necesse est ponere speciem intelligibilem abstractam a singulari de eo quod debet intelligi in universali. Unde licet cognitio abstractiva sit deminuta respectu intuitivae et obiectum ut ibi intelligibile, scilicet in specie, sit intelligibile deminute, verumtamen est simpliciter intelligibile in illo genere et talis cognitio simpliciter cognitio est in illo genere cognitionis."

[36] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 137r.

[37] For Scotus's reservations on the principle "omne quod movetur ab alio movetur," see Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum* 9.14 nn. 23–31, Opera Philosophica 4:630–34; and, more generally, Roy R. Effler, *John Duns Scotus and the Principle "Omne*

The objection that the possibility of angelic self-knowledge would mean identifying the angel's activity with its essence does not actually work, though Scotus does grant the point that Aristotle would probably have allowed for such a view. The reason that the objection does not work may be seen by considering the range of angelic cognition. Suppose we identified the activity of the angel and, more particularly, its self-cognition with the angelic essence. Doing so would lead to the apparently absurd consequence that a property of the angel was more perfect than the angel itself. For the angel could engage in the activity of knowing God or a higher angel, and this would be an even more perfect activity than its own self-knowledge. But the other-regarding act of understanding would have to be deemed to be a property, as opposed to the self-understanding that constitutes the angelic essence, and, hence, would be a property more perfect than the essence to which it belongs.[38]

3. *Angelic Natural Knowledge of God*

In approaching the theme of angelic natural knowledge of God, we need to bear in mind the general restraints under which medieval theologians worked. On the one hand, they had to distinguish carefully between the natural knowledge that angels had of God through their powers of understanding and the supernatural knowledge that they had thanks to their choice to love God. On the other hand, they also had to allow sufficient natural knowledge of God to explain that the fallen angels did not fall merely through ignorance of God or imperfect knowledge conditions. Most of the discussion regarding the limits of angelic natural knowledge of God by medieval theologians will center around these two considerations.

3.1. *Aquinas and Henry on Natural Knowledge of God*

Scotus categorizes Thomas and Henry as agreeing fundamentally in denying intelligible species as the means for angelic natural knowledge of God. Their point of disagreement consists in the fact that Thomas does advance a positive view regarding how angels know God naturally, but Henry does

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Quod Movetur Ab Alio Movetur" (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1962). On the will as the source of its own act of willing, see Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum* 9.15 nn. 31–34, n. 65, Opera Philosophica 4:683–84, 696.

[38] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.3, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 137r.

not.[39] Perhaps it is because Henry has no positive theory that Scotus subsumes his consideration of Henry's position in the *Reportationes Parisienses* into objections against his own view. What I shall do here is outline Thomas's account of angelic natural knowledge of God and then, following the Parisian sequence, entertain Henry's objections against species as the vehicle for angelic knowledge of God.

In his *Summa theologiae*, Thomas examines the problem of angelic cognition of God by distinguishing three ways in which something may be known, according to three modes of presence: (1) by way of immediate presence; (2) by way of the presence of a likeness in a cognitive power; and (3) by way of being presented through and in something that comes from the object of cognition. The first of these ways is akin to the manner in which angels know themselves and God knows himself in the divine essence; the last is the type of knowledge that humans have of God by way of knowing creatures as effects of God and reasoning to God's existence and attributes as the cause of such effects. Neither of these ways of coming to know something is one that Aquinas deems appropriate to the angelic case of knowledge of God. Rather, the second way in which things may be known, the presence of a likeness in a cognitive power, seems the most suitable. On the surface, this would seem to commit Aquinas to holding a position close to that adopted by Scotus, namely, that there is an intelligible species representing the divine essence in the angelic intellect. But actually, Thomas does not appeal to any species in the angelic mind but, instead, appeals to the angel's own nature as an image of God. By knowing itself, it comes to know itself as a likeness of God and eventually God as that which is imaged in the angelic nature. Aquinas compares this to the case of the mirror, but the image of the angelic nature is stronger than a mere reflection in the mirror and, in this regard, approaches the stronger likeness associated with a species.[40]

This theory seems to pose difficulties quite similar to those found in the representationalism associated with John Locke and which Aquinas meant to avoid, in particular by his insistence, in his general teaching on human cognition at least, that intelligible species are that *by which*

[39] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.3.2.3 n. 270, Editio Vaticana 18:315–16: "Ad istam quaestionem dicunt duo doctores istam negativam, quod angelus non cognoscit Deum per aliquam speciem. Sed unus non dicit affirmativam quo modo tunc cognoscit Deum naturali cognitione; alius autem ponit modum quendam."

[40] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.56.3 co. Cf. Harm Goris, "Angelic Knowledge in Aquinas and Bonaventure," in this volume, 171 and 177.

and not that *of which* the intellect is aware when it knows.[41] Certainly Scotus brings to bear upon Thomas's theory considerations that are often advanced by defenders of Aristotelian realism against modern versions of representationalism understood in this sense: if angels are claimed to be distinctly aware of God's existence and nature through the *imago* of their own nature, then this is either understood as a self-effacing pure means of knowledge in the manner that sensible and intelligible species function, or as an image in the way that the image of Hercules represents Hercules, that is, in the way that a sign known directly brings to mind that of which it is a sign. Though Scotus mentions no ill consequences ensuing on the first alternative—he probably assumes that Aquinas would not endorse this alternative, since it is quite close to saying that angelic knowledge of God functions through a species—he does indicate the problems with the second alternative. If the image of God in the angels is to work as a cognitive medium on the model of a known representation or sign, it would only function in the way required to bring to mind that of which it is a sign if the knower already was aware of the thing designated. But that, of course, would undermine the prospect of the angels initially coming to know God through their essences, since they would already have to be acquainted with God in order for their essences to remind them of God.[42] Alternatively, the signs through which angels come to know God

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[41] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 525: "Since the Mind, in all of its Thoughts and Reasonings, hath no other immediate Object but its own Ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident, that our Knowledge is only conversant about them." For a discussion of Aquinas's account and its kinship to representationalism, see Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5–7, 15–18. The classical text in Aquinas is *Summa theologiae* 1a.85.2.

[42] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.4, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 138v: "Contra illud: imago dicitur dupliciter: uno modo sicut species in oculo dicitur imago visibilis; alio modo sicut imago Herculis. Et isto modo imago ducit in cognitionem illius cuius est quod est primo cognita et non ducit in cognitionem alterius nisi ut est in eo prius cognito. Nunquam enim per signum cognoscitur signatum nisi prius cognoscitur signum et hoc esse signum talis rei. Igitur prius oportet cognoscere illam rem cuius est imago quam imaginem, quia si non cognosceretur, quod esset signum illius, ipso cognito numquam non plus cognosceretur signatum quam prius imago. Primo modo est imago quae non est cognita, sed tantum est ratio cognoscendi illud cuius est. Nunc licet ipsa sit ratio cognoscendi illud cuius est distincte et prima ratio, tamen imago secundo modo nunquam est prima ratio cognoscendi illud cuius est sicut effectus qui in se est cognoscibilis nunquam est prima ratio cognoscendi causam, sed effectus qui tantum est ratio cognoscendi et nunquam primum cognitum." This is the same reasoning that Scotus employs against Henry of Ghent (among others) in rejecting *rationes imitabilitatis* as divine ideas understood as the means of knowledge in the divine act of cognition. See Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 1.35 n. 33, Editio Vaticana 6:258–59.

could be construed as self-effacing ones. But, then they would have to be items distinct from the angelic essence and would resemble, as accidental features and as representational proxies, the intelligible species that Scotus endorses.

3.2. *Scotus: Knowledge of God through Abstractive Cognition*

Scotus's own theory of angelic natural knowledge of God relies on a preliminary distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition. Intuitive cognition, as noted above, is the mode of cognition whereby an intellect is aware of the existence and presence of some thing or feature of a thing; abstractive cognition has no purchase upon the existence and the presence of the thing but knows the thing as indifferent to existence and presence. In light of this distinction, the angels do not naturally have distinct intuitive cognition of the divine essence, since such knowledge is constitutive of their beatitude and beyond the scope of their natural powers. Consequently, Scotus understands the question to bear upon the abstractive knowledge of the angels. But such abstractive cognition could be understood to function in three different ways: (1) by means of the nature of the knower itself, setting aside any external causal influences, active or passive; (2) through the knowing nature when combined with the relevant external active and passive causal factors; or (3) through neither the nature alone nor the nature combined with external causal factors, but rather through something concreated with the nature, that is, with something added above the nature but also something with which the nature is endowed.

Angels cannot know anything in the first way, since that would exclude any role for the object and would only allow them to know themselves. The angels cannot know in the second way either, though that would be the category into which we would place ordinary human acts of sensitive and intellectual cognition. The reason that the angels cannot know God distinctly in this way naturally is that their essence gives them no means for such knowledge, and no external causal factor could produce such knowledge either. This leaves the third possibility: the angels know God through a natural endowed means that, according to Scotus, can be described as an intelligible species.[43]

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[43] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.4, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 138v: "Primo modo nullius est angelus cognoscitivus, quia in omni cognitione requiritur obiectum; non ergo sufficit solum cognoscitivum. Secundo modo non potest angelus habere naturaliter distinctam

3.3. *The Tenability of the Species Theory*

This claim by Scotus, that the cognitive device whereby the angels have distinct, natural knowledge of the divine essence is a species, raises the issue of the tenability of intelligible species in general and the fittingness of such species to represent the divine essence in particular. Henry of Ghent, as we saw in section 1 above, challenges the common view that the media of intellectual cognition for angels and humans are intelligible species, but he had also developed a series of arguments against proposing species as representational proxies for creaturely awareness of the divine essence. One of the key considerations, given in Henry's Quodlibet III, q. 1, is that no species could give the representative content (*effigies*) since, as a finite creature, it would be even less capable of representing the divine essence than it could any other creature.[44] Another is that the substance of the angel is more naturally akin to God, insofar as he is a substance, than any species is, since it is an accident; but not even the angelic essence can represent the divine essence. Furthermore, the very determination of the mind by the species could function as an impediment to understanding the divine essence.[45] Here Henry is thinking of his own account of the first object known in human cognition, the concept

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cognitionem Dei, quia omne obiectum habet pro effectu adaequato verbum suum et notitiam sui; igitur non potest in effectum perfectiorem quam sit verbum suum proprium. Sed notitia Dei est nobilioris obiecti quam rei creatae; igitur non potest in distinctam intellectionem Dei per propriam essentiam, concurrentibus causis activis et passivis naturalibus. Tertio modo dico quod sic: quia Deus a principio exsistentiae angeli indidit unam rationem intelligendi quae potest dici species intelligibilis essentiae divinae intellectui angelico."

[44] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 3.1, ed. Badius, 47vS: "Nunc species cuiuslibet creaturae magis repraesentat effigiem alterius creaturae, ut species asini effigiem hominis quam species quaecumque creata effigiem Dei, eo quod in infinitum distat species quaecumque creata a divinae essentiae effigie, cum quaelibet species creata sit finiti et determinati esse, divinae vero essentiae effigies sit infiniti et indeterminati, quia non est nisi ipsum esse. Cuiuslibet autem creaturae unius species finite distat ab effigie alterius creaturae. Sed ita est quod per speciem unius creaturae alterius creaturae essentia videri non potest, ut essentia hominis per speciem asini. Multo ergo minus per aliquam speciem creatam videri potest nuda essentia Dei."

[45] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 3.1, ed. Badius, 48vV–X: "Et per eam intellectus ad videndum ipsam essentiam ut obiectum determinatur, nec posset determinari per aliquam speciem creatam propter infinitam distantiam et summam differentiam limitati ad illimitatum, ita quod ipsius intellectus determinatio quam habet de se maior est dispositio ad intelligendum divinam essentiam quam determinatio per quamcumque speciem, immo ipsa impediret magis et ab intellectu illius diverteret. Unde sicut dicit Augustinus ex parte obiecti: bonum hoc, bonum illud, dimitte hoc et illud et intellige bonum simpliciter si poteris, et Deum intellexeris; similiter possum dicere in proposito ex parte rationis videndi: bonum videtur hac specie creata et illa; dimitte hanc et illam, et vide ipsam speciem quae est bonitas pura, si poteris, et Deum videbis."

of being as maximally indeterminate, and God as the actual object known through such an indeterminate concept. Finally, Henry proposes that God is actually known through his *sui generis* presence in the mind, a presence that is even more direct and immediate than a species.[46]

What is noteworthy is that Scotus takes Henry's objections to species as pertaining to the circumstance of conveying natural distinct knowledge of the divine essence to angels, even though in the original discussion in Henry's Quodlibet the issue was actually the beatific vision, a knowledge that, by definition, is supernatural and involves a mode of intellectual vision (or intuitive cognition, to use Scotus's own terminology). This interpretative stance strikes me as questionable, inasmuch as Henry's own texts do not, as Scotus points out, yield much at all in the way of a theory of angelic natural knowledge of God.

By interpreting Henry's texts on beatific vision as fitting the case of angelic natural knowledge of God, Scotus can address objections to his own view of such knowledge being communicated by species. In order to address the argument that the species as creature would be incapable of representing the divine essence, Scotus introduces a distinction between two ways in which something may represent something else adequately and distinctly. In one sense, nothing except the divine essence may represent the divine essence. But, in the sense that something is represented proportionally well to a given knowing power, we may say that the intelligible species concreated with the angelic intellect represents sufficiently well the divine essence to the angel in much the same fashion that the species of a given color represents that color to my faculty of sight.[47]

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[46] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 3.1, ed. Badius, 48rV: "Non dico per informationem in esse naturali sicut unum fit ex intellectu et specie intelligibilis apud ipsum; nullius enim forma naturalis potest esse divina essentia, . . . sed per ipsius essentiae praesentiam quae intimior est oculo mentis per praesentiam illam qua solus menti illabitur quam possit aliqua species informans." On the concept of being as maximally indeterminate, see Henry of Ghent, *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum* 24.7, ed. Badius (Paris 1520), 1:144rH–vH.

[47] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.4, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 139r: "Tamen perfecte repraesentare et distincte potest esse multipliciter: vel quia repraesentat adaequate, hoc est, quantum est repraesentabile, et sic nulla species repraesentat adaequate essentiam divinam; vel adaequate in repraesentante; etiam hoc contingit dupliciter: vel simpliciter, vel quantum est in repraesentante in comparatione ad istum intellectum secundum proportionem huius intellectus ad obiectum repraesentatum, sic quod repraesentat in repraesentante adaequate, quantum iste intellectus est capax illius. Primo modo nihil perfecte repraesentat essentiam divinam aliud a se. Secundo modo species intelligibilis essentiae divinae repraesentat essentiam divinam intellectui angelico et sic species albi in oculo meo repraesentat adaequate album, scilicet, quantum ipsum est cognoscibile secundum proportionem ab oculo meo. Unde aequaliter posset argui de habitu et de actu."

The other points that Henry advances against the theory of intelligible species receive equally short shrift from Scotus. The objection that one substance is more akin to another as substance than any accident, such as a species, is met by the claim that this would be true of any species (that is, whether sensible or intelligible) and fails to distinguish between ontological similarity and representational function. Species are not like effects known that lead inferentially to their cause but, rather, are representational proxies that, while themselves not directly known, lead to immediate awareness of what they represent.[48] The ability of the species, even though it is finite as a thing, to represent the infinite entity of God seems to Scotus to be a parallel point. Finally, Scotus sets aside as irrelevant Henry's claim that the actual knowledge of the divine essence is given to creatures through the divine presence that falls within the mind (*illabitur*), on the grounds that such a knowledge by presence is something that falls outside the natural knowledge of angels.[49] But Scotus's critique is unfair, because Henry's whole discussion deals explicitly with beatific knowledge on the part of intellectual creatures. Hence, to point out that his view does not apply to natural knowledge is scarcely a criticism.

4. *On the Progress of Natural Knowledge in the Angels*

Posing and discussing a question on the progress of angelic natural knowledge is not that common a practice by the beginning of the fourteenth century. Scotus himself does not pose a question directly on this topic,

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[48] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.4, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 139r: "... dico quod non propter hoc sequitur quod magis ducit [substantia] in cognitionem quam species ... Et ratio aequaliter concluderet de omni specie quia magis convenit substantia cum substantia quam substantia cum specie intelligibili. Et cum dicitur quod effectus non ducit in cognitionem causae nisi incomplete, dico quod verum est de effectu qui facit primo conceptum de se et deinde de causa; sed effectus non causans conceptum de se, sed tantum de causa cuius est species, ducit distincte in cognitionem causae."

[49] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.3.4, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 139r–v: "Ad aliud concedo quod essentia est intimior per illapsum quam species, ideo non quaeritur quantum ad illam cognitionem species nec ponitur, sed quantum ad cognitionem naturalem angeli ... cum dicitur determinatio impedit, dico quod determinatio universalitatis et singularitatis dupliciter dicitur: vel universalitate perfectionis vel praedicationis. Nunc certum est non intelligit [Augustinus] quod debes tollere hanc singularitatem et illam, relinquere universalitatem praedicationis, et sic videre omnis boni bonum, sed debes relinquere universalitatem perfectionis. Indeterminatum ergo et non-indeterminatum universalitatis potest accipi dupliciter et quod relinquitur est indeterminatum universalitate perfectionis et infinitum et sic species erit ratio determinans intellectum ad indeterminatum tale et infinitum, et illud non impedit."

either in the *Lectura* or in the *Ordinatio*; the question is only explicitly treated in the *Reportationes Parisienses*, Book II, dist. 11, q. 2, a place in the *Sentences* that normally elicits questions about angelic guardianship and its place in divine providence.

4.1. *Scotus vs. Aquinas on an Angelic Agent Intellect*

The initial treatment of the question, which precisely asks whether angels can advance in their natural knowledge by gaining knowledge from things, focuses upon Aquinas's views in this regard. The reason for such attention is quite obvious: though the Angelic Doctor had allowed for the possibility that angels had agent intellects in his early Commentary on the *Sentences*, in the *Summa theologiae* he discounted such a hypothesis.[50] Accordingly, when Scotus considers Thomas's opinion, he associates it strongly with the view denying to angels agent and possible intellects and concomitantly the cognitive apparatus whereby to increase their knowledge, for, in the standard Aristotelian view, the agent intellect is a necessary cause in the production of new concepts, which, in turn, are the sources of new knowledge.

The rationale behind Aquinas's denial of agent and possible intellects to angels is that possession of such capacities as natural endowments would prove pointless in the case of the angels. Angelic intelligences are never in potency with respect to natural knowledge, in Aquinas's mature view, since the proximate source of their thought is always actual and present to them in the form of their own essences and the concreated species that they contain. (He thinks, however, that angelic intelligences are in potency with respect to knowledge that pertains to the supernatural order.)[51] To understand this properly, we must remember that, in Aquinas's theory, even though the precise cause of a given angel's understanding some other creature, such as a human being, is an intelligible species itself enjoying the ontological status of an accident within the particular angel, it really is *guaranteed* to be present—analogous more to a necessary accident or property, such as risibility in humans, rather than a standard accident, such as whiteness. Furthermore, Aquinas holds, as we saw above, that the natural knowledge of God in angels is based upon their essences viewed as images of God. Regarding their self-cognition, angels simply require

[50] Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2.3.3.4 ad 4, ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 2:124; *Summa theologiae* 1a.54.4.

[51] Aquinas, *De malo* 16.6 co., Editio Leonina 23:310a–b.

the presence of their own individual essences. Overall, then, the portrait of angelic intelligence in Aquinas's scheme is that of a knower turning to itself and its own cognitive resources and closed off from external causal influences (setting aside divine creation, conservation, and providence), even if the terms of angelic understanding are at times things other than the angelic nature, such as the natures of sensible things.

The quasi-solipsism of angelic minds is one thing that apparently bothers Scotus. But his critique of Aquinas begins with a particular claim that Thomas makes in arguing for his own position. Aquinas reasons that the need for agent intelligence in the angels would depend upon whether or not angels would need to render actual a species derived from sensible things or receive such a sense-derived species. Now, before proceeding, I think we need to understand how Scotus interprets Aquinas's argument for the relationship between agent intellect and the angelic nature. As Scotus understands Aquinas's argumentation, the reasoning is:

(1) If an angel receives knowledge from sensibles, the species of such things are abstracted through an agent intellect.
(2) If the species of such things are abstracted through an agent intellect, an angel has an agent intellect.
(3) If an angel has an agent intellect, angelic natures have to do with potential intelligibles.
(4) Intermediate conclusion: if angels receive knowledge from sensibles, angelic natures have to do with potential intelligibles.
(5) But: angelic natures do not have to do with potential intelligibles, since all of their intelligibles are actually present to them.
(6) Hence: angels do not receive knowledge from sensibles (i.e., the contradictory of the ultimate antecedent of the pure hypothetical syllogism).[52]

[52] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 159r: "Dicitur quod angelus non potest acquirere cognitionem per species creatas ex sensibilibus, quia si sic oporteret quod illa species esset abstracta per intellectum agentem; igitur oporteret quod angelus haberet intellectum agentem et possibilem—neutrum habet. Probatio: quia intellectus agens non est nisi ubi est intelligibile in potentia; sed primum obiectum intelligibile ab intellectu angeli non est in potentia, sed in actu, quia propria essentia est primum obiectum. Neque est ibi possibilis intellectus quia ille intellectus est intelligibilia in potentia; sed intellectus angeli non . . ."

In giving his own counterproof, however, Scotus reduces this more complex chain of reasoning to the following simple inference and claims Aquinas is committed to the warrant of the inference:

(1′) if an angel has a possible and agent intellect, then it is capable of receiving knowledge from sensible things.[53]

How Scotus moves logically from the conjunction of (1) and (2) to (1′) is a bit mysterious. On the surface, it appears that Scotus has not only simplified two conditional premises into one but also has converted the antecedent and the consequent: the original argument moves from angels' receiving knowledge from sensibles to positing agent and possible intellects in angels, but the resulting simplification proceeds from positing agent and possible intellects in angels to the capability of angels to receive knowledge from sensibles. Perhaps the easiest way to resolve the apparent logical error on Scotus's part is to assume that Scotus understands Aquinas's original argument to involve biconditionality and not simply a sequence of conditional premises: that is, Scotus in all likelihood understands Aquinas to be committed to agent intellect and the range of potential intelligibility as being concomitant, mutually entailing features of things. As we shall see, Scotus, following upon a line of tradition in Franciscan authors, endorses a wider conception of agent intellect as a perfection of finite intelligences, but he also thinks that, in one sense, all finite intellects have to do with potential intelligibility.

This logical outline of the Thomistic position is precisely what we must bear in mind to follow Scotus's subsequent counterargument, for he believes that all he has to do now is to show that the antecedent of (1′) is true to secure the opposite of Aquinas's position and to reach that conclusion on the strength of Aquinas's own admissions. He does this by calling upon a metaphysical principle of wide canvass within the tradition of Franciscan late thirteenth-century psychology: whatever is a mark or feature of perfection within a lower power or substance must be posited as belonging also to a higher power or substance. Normally, this principle is appealed to in order to justify intellectual cognition, as opposed to sense

[53] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 159v: "Contra ista: ex ratione istius arguo contrarium. Primo convenio cum eo quod si habet intellectum agentem et possibilem, ergo potest accipere cognitionem <conclusionem M> a rebus. Consequentiam concedit."

cognition, of singulars. Here the principle is extended to a comparison of human and angelic intellectual natures. The detailed argument for the antecedent is that agent intellect is an active power that is an earmark of perfection; but that power belongs to human intelligence, which is a lower intellectual nature; hence, it must also belong to a higher intelligence within the same genus of created intellectual natures.[54]

Scotus also calls into question Aquinas's alignment of the range of the agent intellect with potential intelligibility. Aquinas's denial of agent intellects to angels has to do, as we have seen, with his view that the first object of angelic intellects are their own essences and concreated species, items that are actually present to them as intelligible. Scotus thinks that we should disambiguate what we mean by "first object" of angelic intelligence: if we mean that which is first in terms of adequation, that is, something that precisely matches and moves a given intellectual power, the only intellect that enjoys a perfectly actual object is the divine intellect, inasmuch as it alone contains all intelligibles formally or eminently. There is something potential, accordingly, in the object of an angel's intellect, at least in the sense that its essence and the concreated species do not fully exhaust the range of what angels naturally know (e.g., God). Furthermore, their intelligibles are not always fully "beings in act," for they think one object after another. But, if such is the case, there is some sense in which the object of angelic intelligence is potential, and hence there is no reason on that basis to deny angels agent intellects.[55]

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[54] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 159v: "Probo antecedens—primo quod habet intellectum agentem: quia potentia activa quae non est imperfectionis in natura creata, si inest inferiori in natura intellectuali, potest convenire superiori intellectuali; sed anima nostra inferior est angelo; igitur cum intellectus agens sit potentia activa quae non dicit imperfectionem, ipsa potest competere angelo."

[55] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 159v: "Si intelligatur de primitate adaequationis, dico quod nullius potentiae cognoscitivae est primum obiectum ens actu nisi sit tale quod continet <continuat M> quodlibet cognoscibile ab illa potentia eminenter vel ipsum sit commune, sicut coloratum ad omnes colores. Et si intelligitur de ista primitate, falsum est dicere quod essentia angeli est primum obiectum. Nec enim continet eminenter et totaliter quidlibet intelligibile ab intellectu angeli, nec est commune communitate praedicationis ad quodlibet. Unde nullum singulare obiectum potest poni adaequatum cuicumque intellectioni nisi essentia divina quae est de se haec. Ergo primum obiectum adaequatum <adaequatur (*dub.*) M> in intellectu angeli est potentia intelligibile. Nihil ergo concludit quod angelus non habeat intellectum agentem, nec etiam quin habeat intellectum possibilem, quia in omni eo quod recipit formam oportet ponere potentiam receptivam <receptam M>. Sed per ipsum angelus recipit speciem, quia ut ipse vult in alia quaestione, etsi effectus esset coaevus, posset esse a causa. Ergo si sint concreatae, adhuc potest recipere speciem quae est alia ab essentia et est in essentia."

To render his counter-thesis about the presence of agent intellects in angels even more plausible, Scotus invites us to consider the following thought experiment. If God made human beings the way they are presently constituted, but supplied their souls at their creation with all the intelligible forms they normally acquire from things (in Aquinas's theory, this feature of the thought experiment would satisfy the presence of actual intelligibles to the intellect), humans would still have agent and possible intellects and, hence, the wherewithal to acquire intelligibles, even though, as Aquinas would doubtless remark, these intellects would not exercise their usual function. In Scotus's thought experiment, we find a counter-example in the human beings he has thus depicted: the presence of agent intellect in the same mind along with actual intelligibles.[56]

4.2. *Scotus vs. Aquinas and Henry on Angelic Knowledge of Singulars*

While the focus of the bulk of Scotus's review of alternative opinions is upon Aquinas and his denial of agent intellects to angels, both Aquinas and Henry of Ghent become targets in regard to their explanations of how angels know singular things. Aquinas advances the view that angelic minds know singulars by intelligible species they possess derived from divine ideas that cover both matter and form and thus individuals; Henry thinks that an angelic mind, in knowing a specific nature, can come to understand the individual by considering that nature through a negation of the identity of the individual with the specific nature and with any other co-specific individual.[57] Furthermore, Henry worries that the angelic intellect would be bound and hence limited by knowing singulars, despite the fact that the angelic nature is higher.

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[56] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 159v: "Exemplum ad hoc: si Deus creasset animam plenam formis, adhuc nihil minus <*sic!*> haberet intellectum agentem et possibilem. Licet enim Deus causaret immediate omnem speciem in anima mea nihil minus haberem intellectum agentem et possibilem, quia non propter hoc auferret unde possem naturaliter acquirere cognitionem rerum, et si ipse non immediate creasset cognitionem, sicut patet de anima Antichristi."

[57] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.57.2 co. Cf. Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 4.21, *Opera omnia* (Leiden: Brill; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979ff.), 8:343–46; and *Quodl.* 5.15, ed. Badius, 181rT–V. For reservations regarding Scotus's reading of Henry, see Stephen F. Brown, "Henry of Ghent," in *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation (1150–1650)*, ed. Jorge J. E. Gracia (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 195–219, esp. 205–6. Behind Henry's teaching on angelic knowledge of individuals lies his denial of divine ideas for individuals; see Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 7.1–2, *Opera omnia* 11:8–9.

Predictably, Scotus finds both views unacceptable. He thinks that Thomas's explanation is inconsistent with his own views regarding the definitions of natural things. Aquinas distinguishes between common matter and designated matter. If the divine ideas only represent species, the intelligibility yielded would only pertain to specific natures and should only include common matter. But if Aquinas's appeal to matter in his explanation is meant to indicate an intelligibility that pertains solely to individuals, then Scotus thinks that this would imply that the notions of natural species would be only inclusive of forms, contrary to Aquinas's general position. It is quite evident that Scotus does not really understand Aquinas's views, since he implies strongly here, as he explicitly claims elsewhere, that Aquinas has no divine ideas for individuals as such, though this is clearly incorrect.[58] That is why Scotus goes on to complain about "the universal not being the proper means for distinct knowledge of the singular."[59] Henry's views are deemed similar in not allowing for a proper intelligibility of the singular; his concerns for assuring the dignity of the angelic nature are dismissed on the grounds that knowing the singular is not an imperfection.[60]

4.3. *Scotus on the Progress of Angelic Knowledge*

In his own teaching, Scotus accepts that angelic knowledge can progress by acquiring knowledge of things. In principle, such acquisition of knowledge from things should transpire in four ways, but the disposition of the divine will has permanently excluded one by providing the term of the activity, and thus preventing its exercise. The three actual ways in which angelic knowledge progresses are these: (1) the actual knowledge of the singular thing by the angel; (2) the actual knowledge of the existence of the thing; and, finally, (3) intuitive cognition of the thing—since, in fact, not all cognition of something in its actual existence is intuitive cognition for Scotus.

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[58] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 1A.36.3–4 n. 16 and nn. 29–32, ed. Timothy B. Noone, "Scotus on Divine Ideas: *Reportatio* Paris. I–A, d. 36," *Medioevo* 24 (1998): 359–453, at 429 and 435–36; Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.15.3 ad 4. See also John F. Wippel, *Thomas Aquinas on the Divine Ideas* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1993), 40–42.

[59] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 16or: "Praeter hoc universale non est propria ratio distincte cognoscendi singulare quia non distincte <*dub.* M> includit totam realitatem singularis."

[60] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 16or: "Nec concludit secunda ratio quia tunc esset magis limitatus intellectus angeli quam noster quia supponit quod imperfectionis est cognoscere singulare ut singulare, quod est manifeste falsum."

The rationale behind the claim that the angel does not have innate species of singulars but, rather, can directly acquire knowledge of singulars as they occur in the actual existence of things, is threefold. First, if the innate species communicates only knowledge of universals, we would be denying angels knowledge of individuals altogether, because such universal knowledge cannot yield proper knowledge of the individual. Second, were singulars communicated by innate species, there would have to be an infinite number of species in a finite mind, inasmuch as there can be (in principle) an infinite number of individuals.[61] Third, innate species cannot convey knowledge of contingent states of affairs.[62]

Though it may seem surprising that Scotus distinguishes between intuitive cognition and knowledge of the existence of a thing, since intuitive cognition bears upon what is existent and present, he explains why these might not in fact coincide. One angel might disclose to another the existence of a thing which it knows through intuitive cognition; the second angel would know that the thing exists but would not have itself intuitive cognition of the item. Furthermore, knowledge of the singular does not coincide with either knowledge of the existence of a thing or intuitive cognition, since abstract knowledge of singulars is possible, and such abstract knowledge prescinds from knowing the existence of a thing.[63]

What is important about all three of these modes of cognition—knowledge of singulars, knowledge of the existence of a thing, and intuitive cognition—is that knowledge of the things known by these modes of

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[61] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 160v: "Prima cognitio est huius singularis ut hoc; quia universale non continet perfecte singulare, ergo non cognoscitur per propriam rationem huius ut hoc, cognoscendo perfecte universale. Sed infinita possunt esse singularia quae sunt cognita a Deo. Si ergo propriae species omnium singularium essent concreatae intellectui angeli, infinitae <infiniti M> essent actu simul in eo."

[62] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 160v: "Secunda cognitio est qua habet determinatam notitiam exsistentiae inquantum exsistentia, quia ex rationibus terminorum non potest esse necessario complexio contingens, quia si ex notitia terminorum repraesentaretur determinate te sedere, nunquam posset oppositum esse notum ex natura terminorum, pari ratione si praesentaretur altera pars determinate; si utraqua determinate, ergo nihil praesentaretur."

[63] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 160v: "Tertia cognitio quam acquirunt angeli a rebus est cognitio intuitiva, nec est ista eadem cum secunda nec cum prima. Cognitio enim singularis ut <*add*. in M> singulare potest esse abstractiva, ita etiam potest cognitio exsistentiae ut exsistentia, quia si unus angelus revelet alteri exsistentiam rei pro tali tempore quam videt intuitive, angelus cui revelatur cognoscit exsistentiam determinatam ut exsistentia est, et <*rep*. M> tamen non habet cognitionem intuitivam, quia ipsa non est nisi per obiectum concurrens immediate. Nunc autem nulla istarum trium cognitionum potest aliunde haberi naturaliter quam accipiendo cognitionem a rebus."

cognition cannot be acquired in any other way without direct divine intervention. That is to say, the angels could not have such knowledge of things without gaining it directly from things. Indeed, so oriented towards things is the angelic mind that Scotus allows that, in principle, the angelic intellect could directly gain the species even for knowing universals, except that God has provided the species communicating knowledge of universals naturally at the creation of the angelic nature.[64]

5. *Scotus's Inventiveness*

When we consider Scotus's description of angels acquiring knowledge from things directly by the use of their own intellectual powers, including agent and possible intellects, we may think that the discussion of angelic knowledge at the beginning of the fourteenth century reverts to an earlier state of speculation that occurred some fifty years earlier. If we return to the 1250s and 1260s, we find some figures, such as St. Bonaventure, also positing agent and possible intellects in angels; other figures, perhaps Richard Rufus among them, claiming that angels know through both innate and acquired species, with the former bearing upon necessary truths and the latter upon contingent ones; and still others, such as Robert Kilwardby, trying to allow for an increase in the knowledge of angelic minds indexed to what occurs in the order of time and synchronized with that order for contingent truths, though somehow present in the innate species of the angels.[65] Even the difficulties posed by the theory of innate species for angelic knowledge of individuals were present in some form in one of its early proponents from the 1230s, Guerric de St. Quentin, who

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[64] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.11.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 160v: "Quarta cognitio possibilis esset angelo, scilicet, quod accepit cognitionem universalium a rebus si non essent species eorum concreatae, quia ex quo habet intellectum agentem et possibilem, posset abstrahere speciem a rebus sicut nos possumus. Nunc autem nunquam est removenda perfectio a perfectionibus quin ex naturalibus possint perfectionem habere sibi debitam."

[65] Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.3.2.2.1–2, *Opera omnia* (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1882–1902) 2:119a; Robert Kilwardby, *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum*, ed. Gerhard Leibold (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), q. 37, BAW 16:118, lines 36–38; 119, line 85; 120, lines 94–109. The second of the opinions mentioned is taken from Richard Rufus's *Abbreviatio* 2.7, according to Gerhard Leibold's note in the apparatus fontium, BAW 16:118, nota ad lineam 36 spectante.

tried to claim that knowledge of the particular could be obtained through the relevant universal.[66]

Yet, despite some of these doctrinal similarities, Scotus's approach shows itself to be distinctive, not simply in synthesizing the existing elements but also in contributing new ones. The thirteenth-century discussion focused upon species: whether angels knew created things through innate or acquired species, and whether and how these species covered universals and particulars or just universals. We can see this clearly when we pay attention to Kilwardby's language; he speaks of the *species individui*, indicating that he is grappling with the issue of how an angel acquires a species of the individual so as to know the individual.[67] By contrast, Scotus argues for an immediate intellectual awareness of individuals and natures, not mediated by species, in his doctrine of intuitive cognition. The only hint of such a doctrine in the earlier discussion of angelic knowledge is found in Bonaventure, who, rather surprisingly, speaks of knowledge on the part of angels without intermediation of species through their directing their intellectual gaze to things, turning towards them in their existence and presence.[68] Though Bonaventure does not call this angelic

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[66] Guerric de Saint-Quentin, *Quodl.* 1.1 nn. 26–28, ed. Walter H. Principe and Jonathan G. Black (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002), 185–86: "Sed quomodo cognoscit in universali? Responsio: in causis universalibus: habet enim causas universales particularium per naturam et in eis tamquam in universali intelligit particularia quae fiunt per naturam, non tamen omnia; nec illa cognitio particularis, ut particulare, est innata sed accepta, nec tamen dicitur intellectus eius possibilis quia non habet comparationem respectu eius. Sed quia iam cognoverat in causa universali, cum ostenditur ei in propria ratione, cognoscit sine alia operatione vel immutatione facta in ipso, sicut si sciam omnem mulam esse sterilem, si ostenditur mihi haec vel illa, scio ipsam esse sterilem, de qua tamen non sciebam de propria ratione." See also *Quodl.* 4.1.1b–c n. 16, ed. Principe and Black, 235: "Cum ergo intellectus angelicus abundet ab humano, . . . necesse est quod intellectus angelicus creatus sit sciens . . . Unde dico quod habent innatas species eorum, tamen tantum fiunt secundum naturam et secundum species universales, non particulares, et ex universali cognoscunt particularia, sicut ex hac universali quam scio, scilicet omnem mulam esse sterilem, quam cito video hanc mulam, scio eam esse sterilem."

[67] Robert Kilwardby, *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum*, q. 37, ed. Leibold, BAW 16:117 line 28 – p. 118 line 32.

[68] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.3.2.2.1–2 in co. and ad 2, *Opera omnia* 2:120a–b: ". . . ad cognitionem harum rerum particularium, et maxime contingentium, non sufficit habere species innatas nisi aspectus angeli convertatur et conversio requirit rei existentiam vel in se vel in causa; requiritur etiam praesentiam eo quod virtus angelica est finita—ideo in approximatione aliqua proportionali est cum se convertit ad rem extra." See also ad 3, 2:120b: "Et ideo numquam tot singularia cognoscit angelus quin adhuc possint cognoscere plura sine receptione speciei novae; non tamen sine directione aspectus supra rem. Ex qua directione non recipit speciem a cognoscibili, cum sit in actu per speciem quam habet, sed dirigendo aspectum speciem appropriat et appropriando componit et rem singularem sub sua

type of cognition "intuitive cognition" and does not single it out as a special mode of cognition, there is strong reason to think that he is the source behind Scotus's novel teaching regarding intuitive cognition of individuals and their natures.[69] But, though a direct reading of Bonaventure's text on the part of Scotus is most likely, the intervening tradition, especially in figures such as Aquinas, Kilwardby, and William de la Mare,[70] did not understand the peculiar mode of intellectual cognition introduced by Bonaventure—that is, one directed to the existence of the individual and its properties, rather than obtained by abstraction. Only in the generation of Scotus does such a clear notion of intuitive cognition emerge, and only in his account do we find this distinction applied systematically to the topic of angelic cognition. The direction of the discussion was now to change even more fundamentally.

William of Ockham's rejection of species in all their forms, whether in the realm of sensible or intellectual cognition, led to the use of intuitive and abstractive cognition as marking the fundamental division of cognition and, in particular, as the new model for asking questions about angelic knowledge. Since in Ockham's view abstractive cognition was necessarily parasitic upon intuitive cognition, the mechanics of angelic cognition could be reduced to the causal factors involved in producing intuitive cognition. What this means is that Scotus's account of angelic knowledge occupies a salient position in the development of angelic cognitive theory. His concern with species and his elaborate argumentation for their necessity marks a synthesis of earlier discussions on the role of species, but his crystallization of the distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition, and his invoking it to describe certain forms of angelic knowledge, opens up a way of approaching angelic knowledge that is different from the one hitherto practiced in High Medieval theology. As in so many other domains, so too in his theory of angelic knowledge, Duns Scotus represents something old and something new.

Viewing Scotus's discussion in still more general terms, we may discern the importance of angelic cognition for philosophical discussions of human knowledge. Scotus's defense of intelligible species brings to the

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proprietate cognoscit et percipit . . ." See also Harm Goris, "Angelic Knowledge in Aquinas and Bonaventure," in this volume, section 4.1.

[69] See my "Saint Bonaventure and Angelic Natural Knowledge of Singulars: A Source for the Doctrine of Intuitive Cognition?" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85 (2011): 143–59.

[70] William de la Mare, *In Sent.* 2.2.9 co. and ad 2, ed. Hans Kraml (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995), 70, lines 73–75; p. 71, lines 119–20.

fore the precise role of species in determining the object of cognition, and not simply in actualizing the finite intellect. Furthermore, his discussion makes clear that the role of the agent intellect is not limited to abstracting intelligibles from phantasms, as in the traditional Aristotelian account, but also includes isolating intelligible aspects of things so as to think about those features distinctly. This latter function could clearly be exercised by any finite intellect. What emerges from Scotus's discussion of angels is a broader theory of the mind meant to cover intellectual knowledge in angels and humans. What we might say, most generally, is that Scotus's gnoseology of angels is a step in the direction of a unified philosophy of mind, as opposed to maintaining distinct epistemologies for angels and humans.

ANGELIC LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Bernd Roling

In his classic essay on the task of the translator, Walter Benjamin advances the claim that the ability to render a text into another language presupposes a "language of truth," which Benjamin takes to be the foundation underlying all particular tongues.[1] On Benjamin's telling, the translator bases his work on this "true language," from whose peak he surveys the surrounding "forest" of languages, all of which can be traced back to it.[2] If we were looking for a contemporary parallel to Benjamin's postulate of a purely mental language, assumed to be the functional matrix and the underlying structure of all spoken languages (Benjamin himself would have spoken here of the *lingua adamica*), we could perhaps think of something like Jerry Fodor's proposal of a "language of thought."[3] In the Late Medieval philosophy of language, the effort to get a definite handle on these sorts of pre-conditions of every real language became an important field of research—not, however, within the purview of the theory of language proper but, rather, within the domain of angelology. What is the mode of communication among those purely spiritual substances, known to Christian theology as "angels," who are not dependent upon any sort of corporeal speech-organ and can converse independently of space and without relying on any sort of media? If we remove from the picture all the organic properties that characterize actual human language in the sensible world, such as sounds, written signs, and forms of articulation,

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[1] Walter Benjamin, "The Translator's Task," trans. Steven Rendall, *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction* 10/2 (1997): 151–65, at 156–57.

This chapter builds in part on the initial chapters of my habilitation thesis: *Locutio angelica: Die Diskussion der Engelsprache als Antizipation einer Sprechakttheorie in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008). For the purposes of the present publication, the material has been revised and given a more up-to-date bibliography.

[2] Benjamin, "The Translator's Task," 159.

[3] See, for example, Jerry A. Fodor, *Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 135–54. For an investigation of possible parallels between the Fodorian "language of thought" and the *lingua mentalis* of the Middle Ages, see Martin Lenz, "Oratio mentalis und Mentalesisch: Ein spätmittelalterlicher Blick auf die gegenwärtige Philosophie des Geistes," in *"Herbst des Mittelalters"? Fragen zur Bewertung des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Jan A. Aertsen and Martin Pickavé, Miscellanea Mediaevalia 31 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 105–30.

what is the substrate—the pure language with its pure speech-acts[4]—that remains as the irreducible basis of all spoken utterances? What defines the core of communication *per se*?

In a similar vein, contemporary experimental linguistics seeks to lay bare the development of grammar and the genesis of syntactic structures through computer simulation techniques and the construction of fictional speech-situations untouched by any outside influences. Within this sort of experimental framework, an ideal group of individuals sharing a pre-defined set of meanings can be used to demonstrate how languages develop and how they adapt in ever more complex ways to the needs of their respective speakers.[5] Late Medieval Scholasticism, for its part, had ready to hand an analogous kind of experimental "laboratory": the linguistic community formed by the angels, that is, by those non-human, yet rational, individuals who have no need for any of the instruments of communication that are indispensable to humans. This "laboratory" made it possible, in turn, for medieval thinkers to discuss a whole range of questions having to do with the speech-act in its purity and, therefore, with the essential characteristics of communication as such. The answers to these questions could then be used to shed light on the nature of human speech. True, the presuppositions and interests of Late Medieval angelology were largely of a theological character that would be foreign to much of the contemporary discussion about language. Nevertheless, the Late Medieval debates about angelic speech offer much that is of philosophical interest and relevance even today. So, what were the issues that preoccupied the Late Medievals in this context?

The first point requiring clarification was whether perfect individuals even need to communicate in the first place. Supposing, though, that there *was* still a point to communication among members of an ideal community possessed of a virtually perfect degree of knowledge, the Scholastics next

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[4] In what follows, I will be employing the term "speech act" in a very broad sense to describe any performance of rational communication. Given the topic under investigation, it is natural that "speech act" should refer chiefly to the performance of communication among pure spirits, which is supposed to occur without any sort of dependence on bodily media and instruments. This term is not to be confused with "speech-act" in the narrow technical sense given it by John Searle and J. L. Austin.

[5] Angelo Cangelosi and Domenico Parisi offer a survey of various computer-based simulations of the genesis and evolution of language, as well as of the concrete applications of such modeling in linguistics, in "Computer Simulation: A New Scientific Approach to the Study of Language Evolution," in *Simulating the Evolution of Language*, ed. Angelo Cangelosi and Domenico Parisi (London, Berlin, and Heidelberg: Springer, 2002), 3–28.

wondered whether we should expect their speaking and thinking to be identical, or whether there must remain some kind of difference between these two acts. Moreover, if thought is not already itself linguistic, how do we define this difference? Yet, even apart from the issue of marking off language from thought, a further question arose: In what manner do our ideal speakers convey their information? Are they endowed with some kind of intellectual capacity lying within the pure immanence of the mind of the speaker—or is their communication first and foremost a matter of the hearer's being affected by the speaker? In other words, is the ideal language necessarily act-centered? Is it based on concrete interaction, or is its starting point a merely interpretive "knowing about"?

Further difficulties also arose. What role ought to be assigned to the other, complementary components of mind in the performance of the speech-act? What part does the intellect play in speech, and what part the will? Assuming that speech exists in the first instance as an intramental capacity, how would one go about getting the hearer's attention? And, supposing that language were essentially act-centered, how would it be possible to safeguard the hearer's freedom? Both alternatives had their respective difficulties, and, as we will see, both called for further definitions. An important characteristic of human language is that it includes all sorts of cues, many of them bound up with the body, that reflect the personality of the individual speaker. Would a perfect language permit this kind of individual expression, or would we rather have to agree with Walter Benjamin that pure language is a supra-individual phenomenon that excludes every personal characteristic? Must we think of language as a secret reserved exclusively for speaker and hearer, or is it rather necessarily public? Is the right to discretion a prerogative of ideal language, or is it merely a typically human phenomenon bound up with the deficiencies of human language?

So far, we have enumerated some central questions the Scholastics entertained regarding the definition of an ideal language and the nature of language itself. They added to this list a further, crucially important question: *What* are speech-acts supposed to communicate? One obvious answer emphasized the importance of purely mental items or, in the case of human languages, of signs that referred to such items. Yet, on the assumption that language must be based on semantic representation, all of the difficulties associated with systems of conventional signs would naturally arise, *mutatis mutandis*, for ideal speech as well. What form would these signs have? Are they natural or arbitrary? How do we determine the meaning of a sign? Are inferior categories of signs also "allowed"?

It was also thought that truth would be an important characteristic of perfect language. So, what status did untrue statements have in angelic speech? Are they even possible in a purely conceptual language? Or is it rather the case that the perfection of ideal language rules out the very possibility of falsehood in the first place?

These sorts of questions dominated the Scholastic discussion of angelic language, which, as we have already noted, was like a "laboratory" for investigating the speech-act in its purity. As we will see, work in this laboratory forged four consistent models of angelic speech (*locutio angelica*) that dominated the discussion of the question in late Medieval thought. It is to these four models that the present chapter is particularly devoted.

For Thomas Aquinas and his disciples, the will was the decisive factor that characterized speech-acts for angels. It was an ordination of the will (*ordinatio voluntatis*) that formed a concept for, or directed it to, a hearer and that enabled speaker and hearer to enter into communication. Thomists did not deny, of course, that angelic speech is something intramental; the angelic hearer directly intuits the concept in the intellect of the speaker. The point is simply that he does so without prejudice to the self-contained perfection of the angelic mind, which is incompatible with any unauthorized inspection of its contents.

Giles of Rome and his school attempted to set the question of angelic speech on another conceptual basis altogether. On their hypothesis, the angelic speech-act hinged centrally on a mental sign (*signum intelligibile*), which was formed by the speaker and then somehow presented or conveyed to the hearer. Proponents of this model underscored what they took to be its advantages, such as its ability to account for the expression of the speaker's individual personality and to explain the possibility of lying among angels.

A third consistent model of angelic speech owed its origin to John Duns Scotus. The consensus position among Scotists held that concepts, or *species intelligibiles*, were neither revealed nor conveyed through the medium of signs but, rather, that the speech-act brought them immediately before the intellect of the interlocutor.

The fourth and final model was developed by the Nominalists. For William of Ockham and his followers, angelic thought, exercising a proper causality upon its production, was sufficient for communication to happen. An angel would need neither extra concepts, nor signs, nor separate acts, in order to get the attention of a potential addressee.

After a few preliminary remarks of a historical nature, which mostly concern the role of Augustine and his conception of the internal word,

I propose to lay out the four models of angelic language that dominated the discussion of the *locutio angelica* in Late Medieval philosophy (this will require, however, a brief preliminary survey of the twelfth- and early thirteenth-century prehistory of the debate surrounding angelic language). I plan to present these models in a systematic fashion. First I will look at the Thomistic account, then the sign-based model of language developed by Giles of Rome, then the interaction-model proposed by Scotus, and, finally, the approach favored by William of Ockham, who seeks to explain angelic speech as a mental language (*lingua mentalis*). In what follows, I will also try to give ample space to the criticism that representatives of the various positions leveled at competing models.

1. *Setting the Stage: The Early Middle Ages and the Beginnings of Scholasticism*

1.1. *Augustine's Doctrine of the Internal Word*

If we go back to Late Antique Neoplatonic circles, we already find discussions concerning what a pure language, freed from all organic impediments, might look like. How was it possible for gods and daimons to communicate?[6] We already find thinkers such as Plutarch, Proclus, Hermias of Alexandria, and Julian the Apostate wondering what form of speech could reasonably be ascribed to the daimons, who, after all, would hardly have employed an audible type of communication that depended on sounds or on written signs.

That having been said, it is important to note that some of the basic presuppositions that eventually came to shape later thought about angelic speech were not yet in place for these Late Antique debates. True, the daimons were thought to be incorporeal spiritual beings, but the consensus was that these daimons were also paired with bodies composed of some subtle form of matter. Given this assumption, the idea that the daimons might communicate with the help of some sort of mediation presented no

[6] For a survey of Late Antique theory of language, see, for example, Dieter Lau, *Wie sprach Gott: "Es werde Licht!"? Antike Vorstellungen von der Gottessprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003), 16–84; and Willy Theiler, "Die Sprache des Geistes in der Antike," in Theiler, *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1966), 302–12. See also the outstanding new study by Theo Kobusch, "The Language of Angels: On the Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity of Pure Spirits," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), 131–42, at 131–36.

intellectual difficulties. By the same token, the question of what speech would be like among beings unyoked to bodies of any sort did not arise, at least not in any form that would be of direct relevance to the Late Medieval discussion, which rejected any sort of natural pairing of angels with bodies. Nevertheless, many of the Late Antique considerations of daimonic speech read like a prelude to the High Medieval controversy surrounding angelic language. How to explain the way in which a daimon conversed with his fellows, since he was not bound to the usual human means of communication? What form might such an incorporeal speech among angel-like entities take?

Augustine was probably familiar with a fair portion of these (in many respects) still unsystematic Neoplatonic ideas. The pagan philosophers had provided the question, but it was the bishop of Hippo who furnished the Middle Ages with what would become decisive premises for the debate surrounding angelic speech. Augustine bequeathed two ideas that had a formative impact on later reflection about these issues—either negatively, as a foil, or positively, as the inherited basis of the discussion. First, there were Augustine's reservations concerning just how far signs can really function as information-carriers. Second, there was his hypothesis of a purely mental internal word endowed with an independent causality and capable of communicating information on the purely mental plane without need for any extra mediation.

As Augustine explains in his *De Magistro*, words (*verba*) are in the first instance signs.[7] These signs refer to other signs, and they can be defined or paraphrased only by means of other signs. Moreover, all linguistic signs depend on conventions. They never fully exhaust the meaning that they are intended to convey, but always retain a certain arbitrariness.[8] Matters

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[7] There is an abundance of literature on Augustine's discussion of *signa* in the *De magistro*. See, for example, Cornelius Petrus Mayer, *Die Zeichen in der geistigen Entwicklung und in der Theologie des jungen Augustinus* (Würzburg: Augustinus Verlag, 1969–1974), 1:222–47; Mauricio Beuchot, *Aspectos históricos de la semiótica y la filosofía del lenguaje* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1987), 29–43; Maria Bettetini, "Agostino d'Ippona: i segni, il linguaggio," in *Knowledge through Signs: Ancient Semiotic Theories and Practices*, ed. Giovanni Manetti (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 207–72, at 220–33; and Roling, *Locutio*, 40–42.

[8] Augustine, *De magistro* 3.5–4.10 and 13.41–45, ed. K.-D. Daur, CCL 29 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), 162–69 and 199–202. On Augustine's judgment concerning the fallibility and ambiguity of speech, see also Klaus Kahnert, "Memoria: Sprechen und Schweigen in Augustins Confessiones," in *Die Grenzen der Sprache: Sprachimmanenz—Sprachtranszendenz*, ed. Christoph Asmuth, Friedrich Glauner, and Burkhard Mojsisch (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Grüner, 1998), 13–46, at 16–22.

are quite different in the case of the ideas that lie at the basis of signs. Since the idea *is* the meaning to be conveyed, it is immediately comprehensible to the intellect. It is not signs, but their underlying ideas—and with them, Christ, in whom the ideas are contained—that alone mediate true, infallible knowledge.[9]

Augustine's skepticism about the capacity of signs to convey knowledge prompted him to look for models of speech that would bypass the relationship between *signum* and *signatum*. His concern was to find a way around the loss of meaning that inevitably occurred during the passage from signified to sign. We find a theory of language of this sort in Augustine's teaching on the Trinity, where he presents his well-known account of the internal word (*verbum internum*).[10] A human speaker, Augustine explains, already speaks in thought (*cogitatio*) before transmitting his mental content to the world through an audible or visible sign. The internal word itself can contain a complete speech-act,[11] for, immediately known by the mind, it gives unobstructed access to the underlying idea or intramental content it communicates. All external *verba*, whether visible or audible, indeed, all types of sign, are copies of this internal word.[12] But whether angels or other spiritual entities such as the disembodied soul (*anima separata*) communicate with one another by means of an internal word is a question that Augustine does not address. Various remarks in Augustine's minor works suggest a belief on his part that angels and disembodied souls could speak to one another or, at least, mutually reveal their thoughts, in a purely mental manner.[13] Nevertheless, in the *City of God*, Augustine

[9] Augustine, *De magistro* 11.38 and 14.46, CCL 29:195–96 and 202.

[10] On Augustine's account of the "internal word," see, for example, Luigi Alici, *Il linguaggio come segno e come testimonianza: una rilettura di Agostino* (Rome: Ed. Studium, 1976), 39–63; Claude Panaccio, *Le discours intérieur: de Platon à Guillaume d'Ockham* (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 108–18; Martin Lenz, *Mentale Sätze: Wilhelm von Ockhams Thesen zur Sprachlichkeit des Denkens* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 2003), 33–36; Mary Sirridge, "'*Quam videndo intus dicimus*': Seeing and Saying in *De Trinitate* XV," in *Medieval Analyses in Language and Cognition: Acts of the Symposium The Copenhagen School of Medieval Philosophy. January 10–13, 1996*, ed. Sten Ebbesen and Russell L. Friedman (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Dankse Videnskabernes Selskab, 1999), 317–30; and Roling, *Locutio*, 43–45.

[11] Augustine, *De trinitate* 15.10, ed. W. J. Mountain, CCL 50A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968), 483–84, 486–87.

[12] *De trinitate* 15.15, CCL 50A:498–99.

[13] On the possibility of a purely mental communication among the *animae separata* as well as among the angels, see, for example, Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda ad Paulinum episcopum* 13.16–15.18, CSEL 41:647–52. By contrast, Augustine is very clear that demons have to rely on signs in order to get at what is going on in men's minds. Nevertheless, Augustine does not enter into the question of whether this condition holds for

explicitly rejects any attempt to define more closely what angelic language might be like. The solution to such questions, in Augustine's view, simply transcends man's all too limited cognitive capabilities.[14]

As we shall see presently, Augustine's basic hypothesis of a mental word that already constituted a perfect language in itself became the bone of contention on which the later debate surrounding angelic speech would turn. Nor is this surprising. For, granting this hypothesis, it would follow that thought and spoken word—and, therefore, the reception of the same in the intellect of the hearer—would be simultaneous. And yet, does the internal word really suffice to explain speech-acts? Does not Augustine's hypothesis leave out a crucial pre-condition for language—the distinction between inside and outside, between thought and spoken word? If, as some later thinkers maintained, a similar gap between mental interiority and outwardly manifested content is necessary for the existence even of ideal speech, this would constitute grounds for rejecting, or at least modifying, the Augustinian hypothesis. Above all, supposing—with Augustine—that the content of the internal word was naturally perspicuous, any sort of discretion, any mental reservation, would be impossible. Yet, is not discrete conversation an essential possibility of speech as such, even of a perfect mental speech? Or is it simply a deficit that could be traced back to the corporeal nature of human speech? In order to deal adequately with questions such as these, post-Augustinian thinkers needed to construct new models of ideal language. One obvious strategy was to revisit the signs about whose reliability Augustine had expressed such skepticism.

1.2. *Mental Signs without Loss of Meaning*

Even a cursory survey of the Late Antique and Early Medieval positions on the possibility of angelic speech quickly makes it apparent that thematic awareness of our question took a long time to develop.[15] During this

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angels—or demons—in relation to one another. See Augustine, *De diuinatione daemonum* 6.10, CSEL 41:608–10.

[14] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 16.6, ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alphons Kalb, CCL 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), 507. We find a similar passage in Augustine, *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide et spe et caritate*, 15.59, ed. W. M. Green, CCL 46 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), 81.

[15] For a survey of Early Medieval and Early Scholastic angelology, see, for example, Bernd Roling, "Zwischen Enzyklopädie und Theologie: Die Engellehre des Bartholomäus Anglicus und ihre Rezeption in den theologischen Kompendien des Mittelalters," in *Bartholomäus Anglicus, De proprietatibus rerum: Lateinischer Text und volkssprachige Rezeption*,

period, we see the tentative emergence of an alternative to the Augustinian account that, along with the hypothesis of the internal word, would shape the later discussion. This alternative hinges on the existence of a mental sign (*signum intelligibile*) that the angels form in conversation with one another and that is the central phenomenon of the angelic speech-act. Most of the authors in this early period hesitate between the hypothesis of a natural perspicuity of mental contents, which at least indirectly reflects Augustine's hypothesis about mental speech, and the conjecture that angelic communication might rely instead on some sort of system of signs. One thing that no philosopher of this period calls into question, however, is that angelic language is purely mental.

The first collections of sentences current in the theological schools of the early twelfth century, such as those of Peter of Poitiers or Odo of Ourscamp, champion the existence of mental signs, though they leave this claim without further specification.[16] In his commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius's *Hierarchia Coelestis*, Hugh of St. Victor considers the question whether angels need signs in order to carry on their conversations. Hugh's solution is that divine things, which are the topic of angelic conversation, need to be embodied in a sign (*signum*) in order to be communicable—even for angels. Without such signs, angels cannot communicate with one another. Mental words by themselves would not be sufficient to enable such communication.[17]

The first generation of High Scholastic philosophers, in particular Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and Albert the Great, developed a sensitivity to the complexity of the question of angelic speech and its significance for the theory of language. For these thinkers, the crucial intellectual task in this field was to drive a wedge between the act of thinking (*cogitatio*) and the act of speaking (*locutio*). What does the latter add *realiter* to the former? What is needed to transform mental content into the content of a speech-act? These authors unanimously rejected the hypothesis of mental signs as conveyors of mental content to the outside. But where did this

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ed. Heinz Meyer and Baudouin van den Abeele (Turnhout: Brepols 2005), 203–19; Marcia L. Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 67 (1995): 80–109; and David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 75–92.

[16] Odo of Ourscamp, *Quaestiones magistri Odonis* q. 57, ed. Jean-Baptiste Pitra, in *Analecta novissima spicilegii solesmensis altera continuatio*, vol. 2 (Paris: Rogers, 1888, repr. Farnborough: Gregg, 1967), 54; Peter of Poitiers, *Sententiarum libri quinque* 2.6, PL 211:956.

[17] Hugh of St. Victor, *Expositio in Hierarchiam coelestem S. Dionysii* 2 and 7, PL 175:954 and 1053.

rejection leave the difference between inside and outside? The only way left to account for it was to appeal to some sort of modification of the internal word itself.

The first viable proposal for a solution along these lines was furnished by Alexander of Hales.[18] For Alexander, every speech-act is characterized by an expressive form (*expressio*), which is superadded to the purely intramental content of thought.[19] Nevertheless, Alexander has no time for signs as aids to such *expressio*. As Alexander argues, if an angel had to use signs to convey its *species intelligibilis*, that is, its intramental content, to his fellow angels, these hearers of his would themselves need a new *species* of their own in order to decode the sign as an expression of the *species* that was originally in the mind of the speaker.[20] Consequently, the distinction between acts of thinking and acts of speaking cannot lie in the sign, but has to be anchored instead within the internal word itself.

Alexander's solution, which will hold a great attraction for the following generations of thinkers (it was adopted by Thomas Aquinas, though Aquinas would frame it within a different set of premises), is to posit a *distinctio rationis* between mental word and spoken word. When the *ratio manifestandi*—an intentional focusing of the *species*—is superadded to the mental word, it is transformed into a spoken word. For Alexander, a *species* is essentially intramental, so long as it continues without such intentional modification in the angelic intellect. The *ratio manifestandi*, then, transforms mental content into the functional equivalent of a *signum*, yet without *realiter* adding any entity to the thought itself. The angel generates a speech-act by merely directing the *species* within his mind to one hearer or another.[21]

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[18] So far, the literature has focused on Alexander of Hales' work on angelic speech mainly as a prelude to the Thomistic elaboration of the doctrine of *locutio angelica*. On angelic speech in the *Summa Halensis*, see Harm Goris, "The Angelic Doctor and Angelic Speech: The Development of Thomas Aquinas's Thought on How Angels Communicate," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 11 (2003): 87–105, at 92–93; Irène Rosier-Catach, "Le parler des anges et le nôtre," in *"Ad ingenii acuitionem": Studies in Honour of Alfonso Maierù*, ed. Stefano Caroti, Ruedi Imbach, and Zénon Kaluza (Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, 2006), 377–402, at 390–91; Tiziana Suarez-Nani, "Il parlare degli angeli: un segreto di Pulcinella?" *Micrologus* 14 (2006): 79–100, at 89; Roling, *Locutio*, 68–72; Kobusch, "The Language," 137; and, recently, Constantino Marmo, *La semiotica del XIII secolo tra arti liberali e teologia* (Milan: Bompiani, 2010), 167.

[19] Alexander of Hales, *Summa Halensis* 1a2ae.2.3.2.1.3.2.1 n. 143 co. (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1924–1979), 2:192a–b.

[20] Alexander of Hales, *Summa Halensis* 1a2ae.2.3.2.1.3.6 n. 149, 2:197a–b.

[21] Alexander of Hales, *Summa Halensis* 1a2ae.2.3.2.1.3.6 n. 149, 2:198a–b.

Could a solution which relies on a *distinctio rationis* actually suffice to explain the speech-act as such? How was the addressee of the *species* to recognize that this word, hitherto lodged solely in the mind of the speaker, was now meant for *him*? Bonaventure's approach differs little from the account furnished in the *Summa Halensis*.[22] Bonaventure defines speech as the manifestation of concepts.[23] A concept formed in the mind of the angel, then, becomes the content of a linguistic utterance by means of a special form of presentation (*protensio*). This presentation is a second act, which adds nothing new to the *species* but merely directs it to a particular hearer.[24] All that is added to the internal word is a new relationship, by which the *species* is focused on a certain hearer. Angelic speech therefore has no need for secondary instruments such as mental signs.[25]

Like Alexander and Bonaventure, Albert the Great also locates the decisive modification distinguishing an intramental *species* from its extramental expression in the intentional status that the former acquires by being directed towards an addressee.[26] An act of the will ordered to self-disclosure (*voluntas manifestandi*), Albert explains, transforms mental content into a spoken word.[27] For Albert, this process unfolds into three steps. First of all, the angel performs an initial *conversio* involving both intellect and will in equal measure. Second, this conversion turns the *species* into a concept. Finally, a further modification of the same sort puts the concept within reach of the hearer's intellect. This adaptation

[22] On Bonaventure's account of angelic speech, see the detailed study by Barbara Faes de Mottoni, *San Bonaventura e la scala di Giacobbe: Letture di angelologia* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1995), 237–63; in addition, see Jean-Louis Chrétien, "Le langage des anges selon la scolastique," *Critique* 35 (1975): 674–89, at 667–68, 677–79; Goris, "The Angelic Doctor," 93; Roling, *Locutio*, 72–73; and Marmo, *La semiotica*, 167–68. For a discussion of Bonaventure's theory of language in general, see Andreas Speer, *Triplex veritas: Wahrheitsverständnis und philosophische Denkform Bonaventuras* (Werl: Dietrich-Coelde-Verlag, 1987), 189–93; Ulrich Gottfried Leinsle, *Res et Signum: Das Verständnis zeichenhafter Wirklichkeit in der Theologie Bonaventuras* (Munich, Paderborn, and Vienna: Schöningh, 1976), 158–66, which includes a brief account of the *locutio angelica*, 160–61; and Michael Fuchs, *Zeichen und Wissen: Das Verhältnis der Zeichentheorie zur Theorie des Wissens und der Wissenschaften im 13. Jahrhundert* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1999), 87–94, which also briefly discusses angelic speech, 87–88.

[23] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.10.3.1 co., *Opera omnia* 2:268b–269a.

[24] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.10.3.1 co., *Opera omnia* 2:270a–b.

[25] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.10.3.1 co., *Opera omnia* 2:268b.

[26] On Albert's discussion of angelic speech, see Henryk Anzulewicz, *Die theologische Relevanz des Bildbegriffs und des Spiegelbildmodells in den Frühwerken des Albertus Magnus*, 2 vols. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1999), 2:199–200; Rosier-Catach, "Le parler des anges," 397–99; Roling, *Locutio*, 73–78; and Marmo, *La semiotica*, 169–72.

[27] Albert the Great, *Summa de mirabili scientia dei* 2.9.35.2 co., ed. Auguste Borgnet (Paris: Vivès, 1890–1899), 32:380b–381a.

(*applicatio*) of the concept suffices to ensure its knowability to the angelic hearer.[28] The will to self-disclosure and the focusing of the concept in a new direction are the crucial components of the angelic speech-act.

Albert shares Alexander and Bonaventure's rejection of signs from the domain of angelic speech.[29] As Albert, following Augustine, stresses, *signa* are inevitably arbitrary and are therefore incapable of fully manifesting the contents of concepts. The representation of concepts on the basis of signs is exposed to the risk of error; signs do not just convey concepts, they also generate equivocation and confusion. But angelic speech, if it is going to live up to the high standard of angelic perfection, has to be pure and unequivocal. Moreover, the mediation of a system of semantic reference poses a further crucial dilemma. If, *ex hypothesi*, only signs can be used for angelic conversation, then what place is left for concepts? But, if there is no role for concepts, then there is no way of determining the meaning of any given sign except exclusively by means of other signs, which would lead to an infinite regress. If, however, angels *do* have mental content, but are purely spiritual, then what is to prevent them from directly presenting the *species* underlying the *signum* to one another's minds? What further need could they have for the application of a sign? When it comes to angelic communication, then *signa* are either equivocal or else they are simply redundant.[30]

2. *The Manifestation of the Internal Word by Means of the Will: Thomas Aquinas*

It was Thomas Aquinas who synthesized the positions of Albert and Alexander, even as he modified them to produce what would prove to be the

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[28] Albert the Great, *De IV coaequaevis* 4.60.2 co., ed. Borgnet, 34:636a–637a; see also Albert the Great, *In Sent.* 1.9.I.13 co., ed. Borgnet, 25:293a–b.

[29] On Albert's account of signs and their limited value, see Mauricio Beuchot, *La filosofía del lenguaje en la edad media* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1991), 70–72; Irène Rosier-Catach, *La parole comme acte: sur la grammaire et la sémantique au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1994), 124–26; and Rosier-Catach, *La parole efficace: signe, rituel, sacré* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), 423–25.

[30] Human speakers, of course, often have to explain the mental content behind one sign with the help of further signs. The reason this does not lead to a Derridean infinite regress of "signs all the way down" is that each of the signs used, either in the explanation or the *explanandum*, actually conveys mental content, though not always with perfect clarity. Albert's point, of course, is that such perfect clarity has to obtain in the case of purely spiritual beings such as angels. Albert the Great, *Summa de mirabili scientia dei* 2.9.35.2 ad 3, ed. Borgnet 32:381a, and *De IV coaequaevis* 4.60.2 co., ed. Borgnet, 34:636a–637a.

most successful model of angelic locution in the history of theology.[31] Albert and Alexander, as we have seen, argued that the internal word becomes speech by acquiring a certain perspectival direction, a certain ordination to the addressee. For Thomas, this ordination is the specifically linguistic component of speech. This, together with the idea that the will plays a crucial role in producing this *ordinatio*, is the basic idea of his account. Indeed, the interplay of intellect and will is what, in the Thomistic synthesis, accounts for the possibility of the speech-act (*locutio*) among angels. In this model of angelic speech, signs prove to be superfluous.

What is it, then, that conveys meaning across the gap between inside and outside? What is it that establishes contact between angelic interlocutors? What accounts for the distinction between meaning and the medium that carries it? In the *De veritate*, as well as in the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas assigns the will a central role in the process of speech-constitution. It is the will that prompts the mind to action.[32] According to Thomas, in fact, while all mental content (*intelligibile*) can be considered from three points of view—either habitually in the memory, actually in the performance of thinking, or relationally with respect to other individuals—it is the will

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[31] As one would expect, Thomas's account of the *locutio angelica* has provoked the most discussion in the literature. Among the abundance of works on the subject, see Tiziana Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), 185–207; Suarez-Nani, "Il parlare," 82–85, 87–89; Barbara Faes de Mottoni, "*Enuntiatores divini silentii:* Tommaso d'Aquino e il linguaggio degli angeli," *Medioevo* 12 (1986): 199–228; Goris, "The Angelic Doctor," 87–105; Rosier-Catach, "Le parler des anges," 383 and 395; Hanns-Gregor Nissing, *Sprache als Akt bei Thomas von Aquin* (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2006), 14 and 161–76; Fuchs, *Zeichen und Wissen*, 176–87; Mart Raukas, "St. Thomas on the Speech of the Angels," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 43 (1996): 30–44; Simo Knuuttila, "Enkelten viestintä," in *Kirkko—Taide—Viestintä: Markku Heikkilän juhlakirja*, ed. Sari Dhima (Helsinki: Suomen Kirkkohistoriallinen Seura, 2005), 306–12; Jan R. Veenstra, "La communication avec les anges: Les hiérarchies angéliques, la *lingua angelorum* et l'élévation de l'homme dans la théologie et la magie (Bonaventure, Thomas d'Aquin, Eiximenis, et l'Almandal)," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 114 (2002): 773–812, at 795–801; Claude Panaccio, *Les discours intérieur*, 221–22; Panaccio, "Angel's Talk, Mental Language, and the Transparency of the Mind," in *Vestigia, Imagines, Verba: Semiotics and Logic in Medieval Theological Texts* (*XIIth–XIVth Century*), ed. Costantino Marmo (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 323–35, at 324–26 and 330; Roling, *Locutio*, 79–88; Kobusch, "The Language," 137–38 and 141–42; and Marmo, *La semiotica*, 169. Of the older literature, see Franz Manthey, *Die Sprachphilosophie des hl. Thomas von Aquin und ihre Anwendung auf Probleme der Theologie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1937), 237–41; Howard P. Kainz, *"Active and Passive Potency" in Thomistic Angelology* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1972), 61–63; and James D. Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of Angels* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 294–302.

[32] On this point, see Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage*, 195–200; Suarez-Nani, "Il parlare," 81–85; Faes de Mottoni, "*Enuntiatores divini silentii*," 209–28; Goris, "The Angelic Doctor," 100–4; Nissing, *Sprache als Akt*, 167–74; and Roling, *Locutio*, 84–88.

that weaves together these three aspects of mental content to generate a speech-event.[33]

Having laid down this assumption, Thomas goes on to set up a simple model of how the angelic speech-act works. The angelic spirit reaches into the reservoir of its memory (*memoria*) and selects a *species*, out of which it generates a concept, an internal word (*verbum internum*). As far as the angel itself is concerned, this process already amounts to a complete speech-act. If, however, the angel intends to address a fellow angel, he must direct his internal word to his intended hearer. He does this by ordering his mental concept to the hearer.[34]

According to Thomas, it is here that the will comes into play once more. Just as man's body forbids outside access to what is going on in his mind, so, too, the angel's will secures the opacity of his thoughts to others. So long as an angel's own will places an obstacle (*obstaculum*) to the perspicuity of the contents of his mind, the internal words that he has formed and spoken remain hidden to his fellow angelic spirits. Conversely, when he withdraws the veil of his will, the word that has taken shape in his mind is free to find outward expression.[35]

Human conversation partners, as we know, do not simply relay information to and fro; they also rely on concomitant visual or acoustic cues in order to get the attention of, and win a hearing from, their respective listeners. Among angels, by contrast, the spoken word requires no additional stimuli in order to fix the attention of the hearer. Thomas thus applies to the angelic word what Augustine had claimed about the internal word: it has an efficacity of its own, which enables it to secure the attention of the hearer without any additional aids.[36]

That the specification of the *terminus ad quem* of the speech-act occurs by the withdrawal of the will's veiling guarantees, for Thomas, yet another condition of angelic communication, the necessity of whose fulfillment becomes apparent when we compare it with human speech. Human beings, as we know, are capable of selecting conversation partners to the exclusion of additional parties. Since, however, angels are bodiless by nature, we have to ask how angels can ever have any privacy. Clearly, their nature, being purely spiritual, cannot put them at a disadvantage

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[33] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.107.1 co., Editio Leonina (Rome, 1882ff.) 5:488a–b; *De veritate* 9.4 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:288b–289a.

[34] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.107.1 co., Editio Leonina 5:488b.

[35] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.107.1 ad 1, Editio Leonina 5:488b–489a.

[36] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.107.1 ad 3, Editio Leonina 5:489a–b.

with respect to humans on this score of relation. Thus, there is obviously only one conclusion for Thomas: the angelic speech-act orders the word for the sole use of its intended addressees and excludes other hearers. Even angels, then, can have a private conversation without any extra complications.[37]

Thomas lays out a final consideration, this time in relation to a deficit of human speech. The further a speaker moves away in space from his interlocutor, the harder it becomes for the latter to hear what he is saying. Are angels also affected by this characteristic of human speech? Thomas is clear: the category of space does not apply to angels. By the same token, distance of whatever kind simply does not occur among angelic conversation partners.[38]

At first blush, it looks as though the first generation of High Scholastic thinkers, whose work was crowned by Aquinas, effectively pushes the hypothesis of mental signs proposed in the twelfth century out of the mainstream. Nevertheless, Thomas's construal of angelic speech-acts was already the target of criticism among the second generation of Franciscan thinkers, among whom Roger Marston and Richard of Middleton merit special mention.[39]

In the discussion of *locutio angelica* in his *Quaestiones disputatae de anima*, Roger Marston argues that Thomas's account exposes him to the following question: if something is already known, how can that same thing also be the medium by which it is manifested? Can a *species* that refers exclusively to itself become the conveyor of its own meaning? For Roger, the conclusion is obvious: an additional factor must assume the role of meaning-conveyor. Roger's own hypothesis is as follows: once the word has been formed and ordered to a certain hearer as its *terminus ad quem*, a luminous transmitter (*radiositas*) of mental content intervenes to convey it to the outside world. When one angel speaks to another, he forms an internal word (*verbum internum*) and transmits it to his listener—with the help of a sign-like, luminous information-carrier, which for angels takes the place of what would be the medium for human beings.[40]

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[37] *De veritate* 9.7 co., Editio Leonina 22/2:294a–b; *Summa theologiae*, 1a.107. 5 co., Editio Leonina 5:493b.

[38] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.107.4 co., Editio Leonina 5:492a–b.

[39] On Richard of Middleton and Roger Marston's account of angelic locution, see Roling, *Locutio*, 100–2.

[40] Roger Marston, *Quaestiones disputatae de anima* 4, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 7 (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1932), 292–93.

Roger's confrère, Richard of Middleton, comes to a similar conclusion.[41] Contrary to Thomas's claim, the speaker's will and the removal of the veil it imposes on mental content are not sufficient to account for the transformation of that content into items of speech. The recipient of a spoken word cannot receive that word itself, but—and here Richard explicitly contradicts Thomas—must receive instead a likeness (*similitudo*) of it, thanks to which he can make inferences about its content. But how does the hearer come by this image? Richard's answer is similar to Roger Marston's: the job can be done only by spiritual rays (*radii spirituales*), which convey the images formed out of their respective concepts. Sounds transmit audibile signs in a similar way, but with a crucial difference: the spiritual rays used by angels do not travel through any sort of space whatsoever. Indeed, Richard argues that they coincide with the angel's substance, though without necessarily belonging to his definition.[42] Reading Richard, one might wonder, as contemporary critics did, how the identification of the spiritual rays with the angel's substance precludes the necessity of space for their diffusion. But this is a question that need not detain us here.

3. Signa Intelligibilia: *Giles of Rome and the Semantics of Angelic Speech*

The first critiques leveled against, and alternative models proposed in place of, Aquinas's account of angelic speech were often themselves incoherent. Nevertheless, their occurrence demonstrates that many philosophers were unsatisfied with Thomas's argument that the will and a concept terminating in an addressee suffice to constitute speech-acts. Giles of Rome worked out a coherent counter-model, rehabilitating signs as information-bearers in the teeth of the suspicion of unclarity that had haunted them—despite numerous positive appeals to them by earlier Scholastics—since the days of Augustine.[43]

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[41] On the role of light as a "meaning-transmitter" in the epistemology of Roger Marston and Richard of Middleton, see Theo Kobusch, *Sein und Sprache: Historische Grundlegung einer Ontologie der Sprache* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1987), 97–98.

[42] Richard of Middleton, *In Sent*. 2.9.1.1 co. (Brixen, 1591; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963), 2:120b.

[43] On the Aegidian model of *locutio angelica*, see Barbara Faes de Mottoni, "Voci, 'alfabeto' e altri segni degli angeli nella Quaestio 12 del *De cognitione angelorum* di Egidio Romano," *Medioevo* 14 (1988): 71–105; Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage*, 209–47; Suarez-Nani, "Il parlare," 89–93; Roling, *Locutio*, 103–24; Rosier-Catach, "Le parler des anges," 384–85; and Marmo, *La semiotica*, 174–79.

A number of difficulties had left Giles's immediate predecessors in a state of unclarity. Was a mere change of the speaker's will, coupled with a particular direction of the internal word, really sufficient to make that word, once it was outwardly manifested, interesting enough to get the attention of the intended hearer? Did concepts somehow deploy a natural activity that automatically claimed the interest of the recipient? A second, more fundamental question amounted to a direct challenge to Augustine: does dependence on signs for communication characterize the nature of human speech alone, or is it, rather, a necessary component of speech *tout court*? If the latter, then should not the description of perfect speech-acts give due attention to the sign, which many earlier theologians had understood as a concomitant of angelic speech?

Giles, taking up the approach expressed in questions such as these, departed from previous thinkers who had sought an alternative to the conveyance of meaning through conventional signs. Rejecting the hypothesis of an additional *ratio* brought about by a change in the intentional status of the internal word, Giles sought to recuperate the relationship between *signum* and *signatum*, which he deemed a much more natural way of proceeding than the constructs proposed by rival theories.

In his *Tractatus de Cognitione Angelorum*, however, Giles first devotes his attention to another question. Angels are free. Would not this freedom mean, though, that they have the right to use not only mental language but also every other form of linguistic expression for the purposes of communication? Giles constructs a whole spectrum of subordinate, not-purely-spiritual possibilities of angelic locution, which provided his critics with a welcome target.[44] It goes without saying that angels can assume a body (*corpus assumptum*) and use it to produce human speech. But Giles goes one step further: rather than assuming a body themselves, they can use human bodies to generate sounds for the purposes of communicating amongst themselves. It lies within their discretion to give these sounds a variety of sign-values for use in their mutual exchange.[45] But Giles entertains other, even more far-out, possibilities of subordinate communication among angels. For example, an angel, working on the imagination of a human being, could influence the particular mixture of his vital humors

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[44] On the spatially bound forms of angelic communication introduced by Giles, see Faes de Mottoni, "Voci," 79–83; Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage*, 214–16; Suarez-Nani, "Il parlare," 91–93; and Roling, *Locutio*, 105–9.

[45] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* 12 co. (Venice, 1503; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968), fol. 110ra.

to produce dream-images that other angels could perceive—and also answer in the same fashion! These dream visions, too, Giles thinks, can bear semantic value and be enlisted as a basis of communication.[46] In addition, angels can also impress written signs onto the heavenly firmament, applying their motive power (*virtus*) to bring forth from stellar matter geometrical forms perceptible to other angels.[47]

The central issue for Giles in the debate concerning angelic speech is not, however, this sort of sensibly perceptible communication but, rather, the mental forms of speech that are the language most naturally suited to the angels. Giles begins his analysis with a refutation of Thomas's model.[48] What sort of relationship, Giles asks, binds together the internal word, the *species*, and the concept that, according to Aquinas, is ordered to a particular addressee in the speech-act? Giles then goes on to call attention to an elementary dilemma posed by the Thomistic hypothesis. The concept uttered by the angel, Thomas holds, imparts a new ordination to his mental content. But, in Giles's view, this communicated concept cannot have the same scope as before. He argues that the *species* is a means of knowing something affirmatively or negatively, and, moreover, that it is a means of knowing all the individuals that are contained under it. For Giles, when an angel thinks by means of a *species*, what precisely it focuses on depends on an ordering of the will, that is, on whether it intends an affirmation or a negation, or on whether it wants to think of this or that individual. But a *species* that is shared with another angel does not contain any information about this ordering of the will. So, a *species* as communicated to another angel does not tell the listener what precisely the speaker is intending; all it contains is the message that, as Thomas had stipulated, it was addressed to a particular hearer. In short, there is a disproportion between internal and external word. In Giles's eyes, then, Thomas's model has the unhappy implication that the speaker does not actually say what he intended to say![49]

The solution to this problem lies, for Giles, in what he calls the *signa intelligibilia*.[50] For the sign used in speech stands to the proper content of

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[46] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* 12 co., fol. 110ra–rb.

[47] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* 12 co., fol. 110rb–vb.

[48] On Giles's critique of the Thomistic model of angelic speech, see Faes de Mottoni, "Voci," 84–88; and Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage*, 217–22.

[49] Giles of Rome, *In Sent.* 2.10.3.1 co. (Venice, 1581; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968), 2:481b; *De cognitione angelorum* 12 co., fol. 111ra–rb.

[50] On the doctrine of *signa intelligibilia* as a reply to Thomas's account of angelic speech, see the detailed discussions in Faes de Mottoni, "Voci," 88–97; Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage*, 223–47; and Roling, *Locutio*, 109–15.

the concept as copy to original. By the same token, the sign reproduces this content without any loss of meaning. For Giles, the angel produces an internal word, which he simultaneously makes the bearer of a definite intention. While all this is happening, however, the angel is also producing a *signum*, into which he pours both the word (which as such is intentionally neutral) and the superadded intention of a given hearer. For his part, the listener recognizes the sign and its reference both to the speaker's intention and to the concept in the speaker's mind.[51]

As Giles sees it, the *signa* can claim a further advantage to their credit. Giles admits that intramental *species* play a necessary role in angelic knowledge. But suppose that such *species* were sufficient to account for angelic communication as well. If that were the case, then any given *species*, though contained in one mind, would be perspicuous to another's, at least if this *species* represented natural objects. Potentially, then, any one angel could inspect all the *species* of every other. This would jeopardize the possibility of a discreet conversation among angels. The sign, however, being directly tailored to the situation and to the hearer, is unburdened by this difficulty. Since, Giles reasons, the *signum* is irreducible to a universal content of the sort represented by the *species*, only the addressee to whom it has been tailored possesses the key to decoding it. In particular, the semantic value of the complex signs produced by the higher angels remains hidden from the angels belonging to the lower choirs.[52]

In his *Quaestio*, Giles goes on to define the nature of signs in even greater detail.[53] Are *signa* natural in origin, or is their production left to the discretion (*ad placitum*) of the angels themselves? Given the abundance of possible topics of conversation, it seems reasonable to suppose that the origin of the signs is also free.[54] By the same token, Giles believes that only elementary expressions of emotion are exclusively natural phenomena that do not derive their sign-value from the free decision of the speaker. At the same time, if an angel addresses himself to God, then such freely chosen signs become superfluous.[55]

The other forms of communication, while subject to a decision of the angel's will, are nevertheless determined in various ways by the order of

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[51] Giles of Rome, *In Sent.* 2.10.3.1 co., 2:481b–482a; *De cognitione angelorum* 12 co., fol. 111rb–112ra.

[52] Giles of Rome, *In Sent.* 2.10.3.1, resol. dubii 2, 2:486a–b.

[53] On this more detailed discussion of the *signa intelligibilia* in Giles, see Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage*, 229–39; and Roling, *Locutio*, 115–21.

[54] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* 13, fol. 112rb–va.

[55] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* 13, fol. 114rb.

nature. The sign-value of sensible or imaginative *signa* that angels enlist as aids for communication, for example, is left to their free determination, even when such *signa* are derived from the order of creation. Once the signs have been produced, however, they are, as Giles stresses, to a certain degree bound by their natural reference. The *signa* that angels do not adapt from anything already existing in creation, but specially produce for their own purposes—such as angelic letters imprinted on the heavens—permit, of course, even more freedom in the determination of their semantic value, for they involve no prior given to which the angels must adjust themselves. The same thing is true, as we would expect, of the *signa intelligibilia*, which are free of all corporeal determinations.[56]

There is yet another respect in which angels possess an almost unlimited freedom in the production of signs. Giles insists that, even supposing the number of intelligible *species* is finite, angels can still, at least potentially, produce an infinite quantity of signs for any given mental content. Concepts can be modified as to their extension and subdivided into x-number of sub-units, each of which can then be expressed through new signs of its own. Conversational situations can recur within an unlimited variety of parameters, even though the topic of conversation is always the same intelligible *species*. The only definite limits to angels' arbitrary recombination and permutation of signs are those set by the laws of logic themselves.[57]

Giles derives a further, purely theoretical possibility from the nature of signs. The internal words and intentional modifications that Thomas deemed necessary for *locutio* are always unequivocal. The latter represent the former without any ambiguity at all. But are not angels supposed to have the ability to lie? Moreover, as Giles stresses, lying presupposes a semantic relationship whose truth or falsehood cannot be inspected from the outside. An angel is at liberty to choose whatever sign he wishes, but the sign, unlike the *verbum*, does not necessarily match its *signatum*. Even when an angel's created nature has been confirmed in the good by grace, so that he will tell only the truth, his use of signs nonetheless implies the capacity (which he does not make use of) to tell lies. If nowhere else, Giles insists, the angel must have possessed this capacity in his original state, in which he was not yet confirmed in the good.[58]

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[56] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* 13, fol. 114va.
[57] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* 13, fol. 114vb–115ra.
[58] Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* 13, fol. 115rb–va.

Like the Thomistic model, Giles of Rome's sign-based account of angelic speech did not go unchallenged. On the contrary, it provoked a series of objections. Such objections found ammunition ready to hand in Albert the Great's arguments against the hypothesis that angelic speech depends on the use of signs.

Durandus of Saint-Pourçain takes explicit exception to Giles in his Commentary on the *Sentences*.[59] Giles himself had admitted that speakers are not at liberty to give expressions of emotion just any sign-value they happen to wish. As Durandus emphasizes, it follows from this admission that *passiones* are always perspicuous by their very nature. At the same time, neither the scope nor the semantic value of these *passiones* can be altered, with the result that they are highly unsuited to facilitate the exchange of information in speech.[60] What about the other kinds of signs proposed by Giles?

Durandus opines that the hypothesis of *signa intelligibilia* is vitiated by the difficulty that has already been noticed with respect to the transmission of meaning. Since a *signum* based on convention refers to something, understanding the sign requires grasping this reference. If, however, signs are *all* there is to speech—if speech is nothing but signs "all the way down"—how does the meaning of the signs transmitted in speech get conveyed? The same paradox also characterizes the subalternate forms of communication that Giles had elaborated. For example, speakers must be able to nail down the meaning of written signs if they are to use them for communication. A form of writing whose semantic value is obscure remains (for the unitiated) an empty accumulation of symbols. True, human speakers, at least, can get communication going by performing deictic acts, which simply point to the thing to be discussed. But then again, are not gestures themselves signs? When it comes to incorporeal angels, though, gestures have the same status as all other *signa*; they therefore offer no escape from the hermeneutical circle.[61]

In addition, there was a further difficulty that Giles had not considered. Suppose that a series of signs is produced in a given conversation among angels. What happens to the signs that have been produced once they have fulfilled their function? Do they continue to exist alongside the new

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[59] On Durandus' critique of the Aegidian conception of *locutio angelica*, see Roling, *Locutio*, 130–34.

[60] Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent.* 2.11.2 (Venice, 1571; repr. Ridgewood: Gregg Press, 1964), 1:151ra–rb.

[61] Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In Sent.* 2.11.2, 1:151rb.

signs? How do we distinguish between *signa* that have been used up and signs that are still in use? Adherents of the sign-hypothesis have, Durandus thinks, no plausible reply to make to this difficulty either.[62]

Durandus's own proposal draws on Thomas Aquinas, but, above all, it harkens back to Augustine. Durandus picks up the latter's argument that *verba interna* are already sufficient to constitute speech-acts.[63] The internal word, then, equips the angel with the capacity to address his fellow angels and, if he wishes, to single out one or more of them as particular addressees. Nevertheless, concepts have, as Durandus points out, a causality and evidence of their own. Consequently, Durandus argues, every thought occurring in the mind of one angel will be open to all other angels, regardless of whether the speaker incorporates it into a conversation or not. Moreover, since every angel can at any time access the intellect of every other, one angel's speech-act does not add to another's knowledge. At this point, the question inevitably arises: Why should angels bother to speak to one another if they are already perfectly well informed about one another's thoughts? In order to tackle this difficulty, Durandus asks the reader to consider the parallel case of man at prayer: his prayer is morally meritorious, even though it does not impart any new information to God. What is to prevent us, then, from supposing that the good of angelic society itself requires speech, and that angelic speech therefore has a function above and beyond the simple imparting of new information?[64]

Other philosophers working after Giles of Rome, while essentially in agreement with him, undertook to clarify what they regarded as remaining points of obscurity in his account of angelic speech. For example, Giles's confrère, Dionysius of Modena, tackles the question of how the angels come to an agreement about the meanings of the *signa intelligibilia* that they use in speaking with one another. His solution is to invoke God, who, he argues, infuses various languages into the angelic mind and, in so doing, provides the angels in advance with the knowledge they need to decode the respective signs they will use in those languages. God, in short, is the guarantor of the process of sign-formation, and it is he who backs up the correspondence between sign and meaning.[65]

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[62] Ibid.

[63] On the role of the *verbum mentis* in the philosophy of Durandus, see the short discussion in Mariateresa Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri, *Durando di S. Porziano: Elementi filosofici della terza redazione del "Commento alle Sentenze"* (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1969), 68–69 and 72.

[64] Durandus of Saint Pourçain, *In Sent.* 2.11.2, 1:151vb.

[65] Dionysius of Modena, *In Sent.* 2.8.1.2 (Paris, 1520), 67vb.

The Franciscan William of Ware, one of Duns Scotus's teachers, attempts to make further improvements upon Giles's sign-hypothesis.[66] As we have already seen, Thomas Aquinas, among others, had asked how angels can get one another's attention in the absence of visual or acoustic stimuli. Thomas's answer, we know, hinged on the role of what William, formulating Thomas's doctrine in his own words, would call the *verbum expressum*. In William's view, however, the Thomistic *verbum expressum* remains insufficient to explain how angelic interlocutors secure one another's attention. Yet, William was also not satisfied that Giles's *signa intelligibilia* alone could do the trick, either.[67] What, then, did he propose instead? Now, as we have already had occasion to observe, two representatives of the early Franciscan school, Roger Marston and Richard of Middleton, had held that what they called "spiritual rays" (*radii spirituales*) not only convey information among angels but also establish the contact between angelic speakers and hearers in the first place. William of Ware accepts this early solution, even as he feels obliged to give it greater precision. Both Roger and Richard had argued that the sign-like rays by which angels communicate their thoughts could be transmitted without any sort of medium.[68] William, for his part, counters with an objection: Does it really make sense to suppose that this sort of transmission could occur in space? William's own way out of the problem, which is not picked up again by any later thinkers, is that the angel himself simultaneously produces the intelligible sign *and* generates the appropriate medium for its transmission. Human beings derive their *species* from phantasms based on sense-input, yet this does not entail that the human cognitive process *per se* is spatial in nature. Similarly, William holds, angelic knowledge might be bound up in some way with an analogous type of medium, yet not be inherently spatial on that account. Given this reasoning, what would prevent us from supposing that angels can speak in a similar fashion?[69] William sees a second advantage in the hypothesis of a medium of angelic speech. For the presence of the medium confirms the possibility of discretion that the

[66] There has been no account of William of Ware's angelology since Gedeon Gál's short study, "Guilelmi de Ware, O.F.M.: Doctrina philosophica per summa capita proposita," *Franciscan Studies* 14 (1954): 155–80 and 265–92, at 281. On William's presentation of angelic locution, see Roling, *Locutio*, 144–50.

[67] William of Ware, *In Sent.* 2.10.1, Codex Florentinus, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Pluteus 33 (supplemented by the unpublished transcription of Bernhard Meller, Cologne, typescript 1922), 142v.

[68] William of Ware, *In Sent.* 2.10.2, fol. 143r.

[69] William of Ware, *In Sent.* 2.10.2, fol. 143v.

sign already guarantees to angelic speakers. Conventional signs can be produced for private conversation in any zone of the medium that is inaccessible to the angels who are to be excluded from the conversation.[70]

4. *The Conveyance of Mental Content: Duns Scotus*

Thomas's hypothesis of the intentional ordination of the internal word and Giles's proposal of *signa intelligibilia* were not the only accounts of the *locutio angelica* to govern the discussion of the topic in the period we are considering. Duns Scotus, as we have said, elaborates yet a third model that would also play a dominant role in the later debate.[71] Scotus takes a different tack from that of Aquinas, placing as he does another aspect of speech in the center of his reflections: the interaction of interlocutors and the direct initiation of contact between them. Within the parameters of his novel approach, however, Scotus also rejects the notion of signs as a reasonable possibility for accounting for angelic communication.

Scotus's main target in Thomas's account is the latter's hypothesis of an intentional ordination of the internal word (*verbum internum*). Is the mere self-withdrawal of the will, Scotus wonders, really sufficient to generate speech-acts? How can it be, if, as Thomas supposes, the decisive transformation from internal word to speech-act occurs in the intellect of the speaker alone? Must there not be a modification in the mind of the hearer, too?[72] Is not an act of hearing (*auditio*) an essential component of *locutio*?

Scotus's second objection targets the thesis that a decision of the will could suffice to make a concept in the speaker's mind accessible to the hearer. On this score, Scotus believes, Thomas involves himself in a whole tangle of contradictions. On what grounds, Scotus wonders, are we to

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[70] William of Ware, *In Sent.* 2.10.2, fols. 143v–144r.

[71] For a general presentation of the angelology of Duns Scotus, see, for example, D. E. Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 342–50; or Renzo Lavatori, *Gli Angeli* (Genua: Marietti, 1991), 152–55. On the Scotist model of angelic speech, see Roling, *Locutio*, 173–94; and Marmo, *La semiotica*, 180–81.

[72] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.9.2, Oxford, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 152v: "Contra illud quero quid intelligitur per concipere aliquid ad alterum, vel in ordine ad alterum. Aut per hoc causatur aliquid in alio vel nichil. Si nichil, non plus causatur noticia in alio per illam conceptionem ad alterum quam prius, quia si non causetur nisi aliquid manens intrinsece in agente, nullo modo aliter se habet alius per hoc si aliud causetur, ergo oportet quod ibi sit aliquid transiens ab uno angelo ad alium, quod tamen ipsi negant."

suppose that the decision of the will that explains the withholding of certain concepts from other parties would themselves remain secret? Must we not instead posit a further act of the will that serves to keep the first one hidden? Does not this raise the specter of a vicious circle?[73] Moreover, an angel's cognitive acts are themselves intelligible objects, which exercise natural (rather than free) causality on a knower. For Scotus, that something exercises natural causality implies that when the necessary conditions for its causality are met, the cause cannot fail to have its effect, and the will cannot prevent this. Therefore, the angels cannot control by means of their will whether or not their thoughts are communicated to a particular addressee.[74]

Scotus's alternative proposal, then, consists in mounting a case for the ability of angels to intervene directly in the mental sphere of their conversation partners. The center of speech does not lie, as Aquinas had thought, in the intellect of the speaker. Speech must rather affect the addressee of the message as much as it involves the sender.

As Scotus argues, action (*actio*) and passion (*passio*) have the same *ratio*. Now, suppose an angel possesses actual knowledge of a certain fact, whereas his fellow angel possesses it only potentially. Since any agent capable of bringing about an effect can do so in any proportionate object that is sufficiently close by,[75] it follows that there can be no impediments to the transferral of knowledge from the first angel to the second.[76] In other words, if the first angel is capable of generating a concept in himself,

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[73] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.9.2, Oxford, Merton College, MS 61, fols. 152v–153r: "Item, non magis potest intellectio claudi ab alio cum est in actu quam est volucio; sed volucio dum est in actu non potest claudi quin intelligitur ab alio debite approximato, nam ipsa non potest claudi respectu alterius se ipsa; ergo per aliam volucionem adhuc illa, si non est clausa, non claudit aliam, quia intellectus videns voluntatem claudentem videt illam quam claudit; ergo illa est clausa per aliam, et illa per aliam, in infinitum."

[74] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.9.2, Oxford, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 152v: "Item, cum illa cognicio sit per se intelligibilis, actio sua est naturalis respectu intellectus approximati et dispositi; sed actio cause naturalis non subest alicui voluntati create; ergo non potest non agere in intellectum alterius angeli quando est intellectio in actu et alius angelus approximatur."

[75] On Scotus's understanding of the complementary relationship existing between *potentia activa* and *potentia passiva* in the cognitive process, see, among others, Giovanni Pizzo, *Intellectus und memoria nach der Lehre des Johannes Duns Scotus: Das menschliche Erkenntnisvermögen als Vollzug von Spontanität und Rezeptivität* (Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker, 1998), 20–36; and Robert Pasnau, "Cognition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 285–311, at 290–93.

[76] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.9.2 n. 52, Editio Vaticana 8:157–58.

he is also capable of generating it in the mind of the second.[77] Conclusion: One angel speaks to another by immediately producing a concept in the intellect of his hearer.

Once we are clear about this, Scotus thinks, we can conceive of three distinct forms of communication and information-transmission among angels. An angel can generate an act of knowledge (*actus intelligendi*) in the mind of another, he can convey both an act and a *species* to it, or else he can transmit just a *species*.[78]

Regarding the first possibility, Scotus explains that, if both interlocutors already have a *species* of the object they are discussing, neither needs to transmit it to the other; such transmission to the intellect of the hearer would be superfluous. What happens instead is that the speaker merely transmits a cognitive act, whose function is to recall to the hearer the *species* already present in the hearer's mind.[79] And if the hearer's intellectual capacities should be insufficient to grasp the matter to be conveyed? Here too, the speaker comes to the hearer's aid with a cognitive act that enables him, the hearer, to form a concept out of the *species* in the hearer's mind. Suppose, however, that the matters to be discussed in an angelic conversation are totally unfamiliar to the hearer. In this case, the speaker could communicate both the *species* and the act of knowledge, which is the second of the two possibilities mentioned above.[80] The third possibility corresponds to some of the even more complex situations that Scotus thinks could obtain in angelic speech. Let us say that a subordinate angel is unable to claim the attention of a superior one. Even so, he does have the ability to send a *species* into the superior angel's mind. Once the latter turns his attention away from the object that has hitherto engrossed it, he will notice this *species* in his intellect and enter into contact with the sender. It is also conceivable, Scotus maintains, that a third, even higher angel could aid the speaker by imparting the requisite cognitive act to the hearer.[81]

Scotus goes on to forestall objections that might be advanced against his explanation of angelic speech-acts in terms of the transfer of mental content from angel to angel. Does not the speaker's intellect subject the

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[77] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.9.2 nn. 49–51, Editio Vaticana 19:29–30.
[78] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.9.2 n. 69, Editio Vaticana 8:166–67.
[79] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.9.2 n. 72, Editio Vaticana 19:38.
[80] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.9.2 n. 70, Editio Vaticana 8:167.
[81] Duns Scotus, *Lectura* 2.9.2 nn. 74–76, Editio Vaticana 19:39; *Ordinatio* 2.9.2 nn. 71–73, Editio Vaticana 8:167–68.

intellect of the hearer to a certain constraint? And is the sort of interaction Scotus envisages sufficient to convey *every* type of knowledge, or just some types? Finally, suppose that an angel is granted the beatific vision; would not Scotus's account imply that he can communicate this vision to a fellow angel, even if the latter lacks the requisite merits and capacities?

Scotus has no difficulty admitting that one angel's transferral of mental content to another does not automatically imply the latter's consent. On the contrary, Scotus himself insists that, while the speaker can communicate his cognitive act—his *cogitatio*—this act cannot influence the hearer unless the object itself is present to him.[82] Direct intuition (*visio intuitiva*), in other words, is the key factor in angelic cognition for Scotus; without it, even speech remains an uncertain conveyor of knowledge among the angels. Neither the *species* nor the cognitive act that one angel has received from another is in and of itself sufficient evidence that the corresponding objects really exist; only direct intuition, in other words, guarantees the angels possession of an indubitably certain knowledge. Scotus's distinction between the knowledge mediated through transfer of mental content, on the one hand, and immediate intuitive knowledge, on the other, enables him to answer in one stroke all three objections enumerated above: neither the *species* nor the cognitive act that one angel transfers to another conveys intuitive vision (objection two), let alone the beatific vision (objection three); by the same token, moreover, neither the transferral of *species* nor of cognitive acts constrains the mind of the hearer (objection one). Also by the same token, every angel has, in Scotus's view, the capacity to lie,[83] even though the unfallen angels are no longer tempted to use it. He also has the power—and this is a clear advantage of Scotus's model—to select his addressees, directly implanting mental content in the minds of some hearers, while by that same act consciously excluding others.[84]

Scotus tackles another fundamental question. Supposing that some angels receive the grace of direct intuition of all objects of knowledge in the divine Word (*Verbum*) itself (which of course Scotus himself would grant). Why should they then still bother to communicate amongst themselves at all? But then there is a further, though not unrelated, issue. If, as the Thomists hold, the angels are equipped from the beginning of

[82] Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, 2.9.2 nn. 79–81 and n. 85, Editio Vaticana 19:40 and 42.
[83] Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, 2.9.2 n. 81, Editio Vaticana 19:40.
[84] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.9.2 nn. 81–82, Editio Vaticana 8:173–74.

creation with all the *species* that they will need, what would they have left to talk about with others? Could they acquire any meaningfully new information?[85]

Scotus makes two decisions at this point that are characteristic not only of his understanding of language but also of his theory of knowledge in general. First of all, even if angels already knew all things in the Word or, at any rate, had access to all the thoughts located in the minds of their fellows, speech and communication would still have an important social function for them. Even a community whose members' lives are completely interwoven and perfectly interpenetrate each other—even such a community is lacking something unless those who share in it are involved in a mutual exchange and reveal themselves to one another in ever new ways. Communication, Scotus insists, has a value of its own that exists even when each interlocutor knows what the others are going to say.[86]

Scotus's second decision is to insist that angelic knowledge is never complete once and for all. The changeable world ceaselessly produces new contingencies that are not necessarily contained in the *species* already existing in the angels' minds. It is no diminution of angelic perfection, Scotus argues, to suppose that they, too, gain new information about such novel contingencies, and so form new *species* that were not always present in their minds. By the same token, there is no reason why angels should not exchange their new knowledge of contingent developments with their fellows. The fact that angels can have new experiences makes exchange among them necessary after all. There are, thus, no *a priori* restrictions on the compass of angelic speech.[87]

Scotus's model of angelic speech-acts, based on the impression of a *species* in the mind of the hearer, did not remain unchallenged in the decades following his death. One of the principal targets of criticism was the perceived lack of sophistication in Scotus's account of how action and passion play themselves out in the relationship between speaker and hearer; some critics were unsatisfied with what they took to be the one-sidedness with which Scotus places the movement from potency to act on the side of the hearer.

Scotus's fellow Franciscan and a proponent of the *signa intelligibilia* model, Francis of Marchia, subjects his confrère's thought on this topic to

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[85] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.9.2 n. 9, Editio Vaticana 8:135.
[86] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.9.2 n. 93, Editio Vaticana 8:180–81.
[87] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.9.2 nn. 97–99, Editio Vaticana 8:182–83.

close scrutiny, as Tiziana Suarez-Nani has shown.[88] Scotus had claimed that speaker and hearer are related as an *agens* and a *patiens* of the same *ratio*. But he had then gone on to argue that an angel can just as readily produce a *species* in another's intellect as in his own. At this point, Francis objects that Scotus's argument would lead us to expect that, if one eye can leave a *species* of itself in another, it can also generate one in itself. Although this is clearly absurd, it is just the sort of thing Francis thinks that we should have to admit without hesitation if, as Scotus holds, the fact of being agent and patient in the same order were sufficient to secure angels' capacity to communicate content generated in their own minds to the minds of their fellows.[89] Francis's point, then, is this: an agent may virtually include a certain effect, but the effect as such is always the term of a transient activity, never something it produces in itself. Scotus's appeal to action and passion within a common *ratio* is therefore unable to explain how one angel can transfer its own mental content to the mind of another, since, so Francis thinks, whatever content it transferred would belong exclusively to the domain of transient action.[90]

Francis also lays out another difficulty to which Scotus himself had alluded. If angels can directly transfer their *species* and cognitive acts, then there is no reason why this could not be true of volitional acts as well. But how could an angel still act freely if it received another's volitional act? Indeed, could not a demon impose its will on an angel?[91]

It goes without saying that orthodox Scotists were not prepared to take these objections lying down. Francis of Meyronnes tackles Francis of Marchia's critique head on.[92] He argues that purely intellectual acts

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[88] On the *quaestiones* that Francis of Marchia devotes to the *locutio angelica* in his Commentary on the *Sentences*, see Tiziana Suarez-Nani, " 'Linguaggio, conoscenza, e libertà': Note in margine alle questioni 26 et 27 del commento di Francesco de Marchia al II° libro delle Sentenze," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 50 (2003): 354–75, which includes generous citations from the MS Vat. Barberini lat. 791 (the manuscript deals with angelic speech at fols. 54vb–58ra). On angelic cognition in general in the philosophy of Francis of Marchia, see Suarez-Nani, "Un modello alternativo di conoscenza? Francesco de Marchia e la spazializzazione del rapporto conoscitivo," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 53 (2006): 345–66, at 357–66; and Suarez-Nani, "Intuition, composition, division: La modalité de la connaissance angélique selon François de Marchia," *Picenum Seraphicum* 24 (2005): 103–45, which, at 128–45, presents an edition of quaestio 23 of the second book of Francis's Commentary on the *Sentences*.

[89] Suarez-Nani, " 'Linguaggio, conoscenza, e libertà,' " 360–63.

[90] Suarez-Nani, " 'Linguaggio, conoscenza, e libertà,' " 361.

[91] Suarez-Nani, " 'Linguaggio, conoscenza, e libertà,' " 363–64.

[92] For a brief presentation of angelology in Francis of Meyronnes, see Heribert Rossmann, *Die Hierarchie der Welt: Gestalt und System des Franz von Meyronnes OFM mit*

are exclusively intra-subjective in nature. Nevertheless, a volitional act that accompanies a cognitive act can give the latter an *ad extra* influence. When this happens, the relationship of action and passion, which had until now obtained only within the intellect of the speaker, extends without further ado to the encounter between hearer and speaker.[93] In other words, angelic hearer and speaker now stand to each other in the same relationship of actuality and potency as agent and patient intellect stand to each other in the individual angel's intellect. A further point that Francis of Meyronnes brings to bear on the discussion has to do with the harmony of the angelic community. Even if an angel, at least theoretically, can impose an act of will upon another in the same way that he can generate a *species* and a cognitional act in the latter's intellect, he will never do so as a matter of fact, on account of the concord that reigns in the heavenly city.[94]

5. *The Internal Word as a Speech-Act: William of Ockham*

The last of the four High Medieval models proposed to explain the pure speech-act largely returns to the starting point of the discussion, which is to say, to Augustine's reflections on the internal word. Ockham, the creator of this model, devotes his attention to the *locutio angelica* in a number of works.[95] Unlike Thomas Aquinas, he does not think that the concepts to be deployed in a speech-act require a new intentional ordination for their as-yet-hidden content to become manifest. All the concepts present in the mind are part of a mental language, and, in and of themselves, they are already evident to both speaker and hearer. Internal

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besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Schöpfungslehre (Werl: Dietrich-Coelde-Verlag, 1972), 212–26. On Francis's defense of the Scotist reconstruction of the *locutio angelica*, see Roling, *Locutio*, 237–42.

[93] Francis of Meyronnes, *In Sent.* 2.9.1 (Venice, 1520; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1966), fol. 147ra–rb.

[94] Francis of Meyronnes, *In Sent.* 2.9.1, fol. 147va.

[95] Ockham's reconstruction of the *locutio angelica* receives explicit treatment in Andrea Tabarroni, "Mental Signs and the Theory of Representation in Ockham," in *On the Medieval Theory of Signs*, ed. Umberto Eco and Constantino Marmo (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1989), 195–224, at 209–11; Panaccio, "Angel's Talk," 328–30; Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of Its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 368–74; Lenz, *Mentale Sätze*, 128–31; Mikko Yrjönsuuri, "William Ockham and Mental Language," in *Representation and Objects of Thought in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2007), 101–15, at 104–6; and Roling, *Locutio*, 257–70.

speech already coincides with linguistic interaction. Similarly, Ockham rejects Scotus's proposal of intervention in the mind of the angelic hearer, as well as Giles's attempt to rehabilitate signs and the semantic relationship Giles believes they establish. In this sense, Ockham's conceptual framework connects him with Durandus of Saint Pourçain.

Ockham, then, spares neither Thomas, Giles, nor Scotus his critique.[96] Thomas had claimed that angels cannot directly inspect one another's thoughts but must wait until these thoughts are specially directed at them. Yet, as Ockham points out, Thomas had shown that inferences from sign to signified carry a risk of error that is incompatible with the perfection of angelic speech.[97] But, Ockham reasons, is not Thomas in effect proposing a relationship between the concept in the mind of the speaker and a second concept manifested to the hearer, a relationship that is liable to the same difficulty? Here too, Ockham thinks, the hearer would have to infer something about the speaker's immanent mental content on the basis of the new concept that he, the hearer, receives from the speaker. At the same time, all causal relations are subject to divine power; God could suspend them—and thus render invalid—chains of inferential reasoning based on them. This means that, in principle, the inferential move from the second concept back to the first is not absolutely secure, unless the angel enjoyed a power equal to God's that Ockham does not think any creature can possess.[98]

Ockham creatively borrows from Giles to mount a second objection against the Thomistic model. Suppose an angelic speaker makes his mental content available to a hearer. Thereafter, the hearer presumably sees this concept in the speaker's intellect. But how does the hearer know whether the speaker intended to communicate the concept as a whole or whether he meant only to convey the individuals that fall under it? Is there anything in the speech-act that could enable the hearer to distinguish between particulars (*particularia*) and general propositions? The

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[96] On Ockham's critique of the Thomist theory of angelic speech, see also Panaccio, *Le discours intérieur*, 223–24; Panaccio, "Angel's Talk," 325, 327; Knuuttila, "Enkelten viestintä," 316; and Roling, *Locutio*, 257–60.

[97] On *signa* in Ockham's philosophy, see, among many others, Pierre Alféri, *Guillaume d'Ockham: le singulier* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1989), 274–82; Teodor De Andrés, *El nominalismo de Guillermo de Ockham como filosofía del lenguaje* (Madrid: Gredos, 1969), 80–89; and Claude Panaccio, *Ockham on Concepts* (Aldershot and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 45–51.

[98] William of Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.16, ed. Gedeon Gál and Rega Wood (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1981), *Opera theologica* 5:359.

plurality of individuals potentially contained in a universal concept needs to be emphasized over against the universal concept itself, yet it is precisely to these individuals that, for Ockham, Aquinas's model of angelic speech fails to do sufficient justice. Thomas, Ockham thinks, has not succeeded in securing the conveyance to the hearer, without intermediate steps, of the entirety of the message the speaker wishes to communicate to him.[99]

Ockham also finds wanting the solutions proposed by Giles and Scotus. What grounds, Ockham wonders, does Giles have for supposing that the intentions the *signa intelligibilia* superadd to the *species* remain hidden from the chosen hearer's fellow angels? If the *species* present in the several intellects of the various angels are all of the same kind, then why would not this perspicuity carry over to, and bestow equal evidence on, inferences that are drawn from these *species*?[100]

As for Scotus, Ockham repeats the objections that had already been set forth by Scotus's first critics among other Franciscans. Ockham grants Scotus that angelic speakers exercise a direct causal influence on their hearers. But then, as Francis of Marchia had already wondered, does this mean that the angel can also directly transfer volitional acts, or even the *visio beatifica*, into his interlocutor's mind?[101] Ockham further takes issue with Scotus's teaching that cognitive acts can be conveyed to the recipient without the *species* that would normally accompany them. Since Scotus himself places the *species* at the center of the cognitive process, it is not at all clear what a cognitive act without a *species* would look like. How could there even *be* an act of cognition (*actus intelligendi*) that refers to no object, or whose subject lacks the conceptual mediation (and so one of the crucial immanent principles) that is normally required for such an act to take place?

Ockham has another fundamental criticism to bring forward. Scotus's account of angelic speech leaves no room for an involvement on the part of the hearer. But how can the speaker, Ockham asks, be the total cause—the *causa totalis*—of the cognitive act generated in the hearer? Does not an act of hearing (*auditio*) require more than just the reception of the concept communicated by the speaker? Must not the hearer's intellect also go to work on the concept as well? Indeed, Ockham pushes this

[99] Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.16, *Opera theologica* 5:360.
[100] Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.16, *Opera theologica* 5:362–63.
[101] Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.16, *Opera theologica* 5:372–73.

line of questioning further: Does not the object intended by the concept also contribute to successful *auditio* as one of its partial causes? Since no speaker can prevent a hearer from speaking himself, there is no reason to suppose that a speaker can be the total cause of a speech-act in the sense that Scotus envisages.[102]

Ockham proposes a simple alternative to the models he has examined. The internal word, the *locutio mentalis*, is not just the first step towards a complete speech act, as it was for Thomas; rather, it itself is already sufficient to account for the pure speech-act in its entirety. No new intentionalities, no new acts, indeed, no new equipment at all is needed. Just as a visible object presents itself immediately to the human eye, so, too, the *locutio mentalis* brings forth a mental word (*verbum mentale*) that is grasped at once by the hearer. Once a mental word has come forth, it immediately produces a cognitive act (*cogitatio*) in the mind of the hearer.[103] In other words, to think simply is to speak, and hearing simply is to be in the presence of someone who thinks. It is worth pointing out, as later critics of Ockham did, that this immediate production of a cognitive act in the mind of the hearer seems to undermine Ockham's critique of Scotus for making the angelic hearer too passive. In the end, the active involvement of the angelic hearer in Ockham's account would seem to be no greater than it is in Scotus's.

In agreement with the point Durandus had already made, Ockham holds that *verba mentalia* possess an efficacy of their own, so that they require no additional equipment in order to gain the attention of potential listeners. By the same token, to hear a mental word is one and the same thing as to know the state of affairs it is intended to convey.[104] Depending on the mental grasp and intention of the speaker, the internal word may include both individual things and universal concepts, both the general and the concrete.

Given the parameters that Ockham sets up, speech is clearly a public act. The consequence, in fact, would be, as Armand Maurer already has pointed out, that every angel would have to be present to the whole community of angels, without any sense of privacy. The confusion of words and voices could be overwhelming. At the same time, of course, God, for Ockham, is always free to introduce a measure of discretion and privacy

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[102] Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.16, *Opera theologica* 5:374–75.

[103] William of Ockham, *Quodl.* 1.6.1, ed. Joseph C. Wey (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1980), *Opera theologica* 9:36.

[104] Ockham, *Quodl.* 1.6.2, *Opera theologica* 9:37–38.

into angelic conversations if he should find it necessary to do so. Moreover, Ockham stresses that higher angels, at least, have the power (as Giles had already conjectured) to speak in such a difficult fashion that other, less mentally well-endowed angels would be unable to understand them.[105]

Maybe the most original aspect of Ockham's theory of angelic language is his opinion that all angelic thinking takes the form of language. In other words, in his eyes, angels do not think by a means of a simple grasp like God (as Thomas Aquinas would have it), but rather in compositional fashion just as humans do.[106] By way of concluding the discussion of Ockham, let us look briefly at just one author who endeavored to construct an alternative to his model of angelic locution—the Augustinian Gregory of Rimini. Gregory explicitly takes exception to Ockham's identification of angelic speech with the *verba mentalia* of the *lingua mentalis*.[107] For Ockham, in Gregory's view, has forgotten a central component of angelic perfection, namely, the freedom of the angel's will. How, Gregory asks, can Ockhamist angels decide not to speak to their fellow angels if every act of thinking already constitutes a linguistic performance? The plausibility of Ockham's argumentation rests upon the premise that mental words possess the innate power to generate thoughts in the intellect of their hearers, and that the efficacy of this power does not depend upon the will of the speaker. Yet, is it not the case that thoughts are produced in the angelic intellect by means of a decision of the will as well? Are not the angel's thoughts at least to a large extent under the angel's own control? That being the case, then what grounds could there be for supposing that angels are unable to withhold the mental contents from their fellows? Gregory thus agrees with Thomas: *verba mentalia* alone are not enough

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[105] Ockham, *Quodl.* 1.6.2 ad dub. 2, *Opera theologica* 9:39–40. See Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham*, 372–73.

[106] On this point, see Martin Lenz, "Why Can't Angels Think Properly? Ockham against Chatton and Aquinas," in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, 155–67, esp. 157–63.

[107] For an ample treatment of Gregory of Rimini's discussion of the *lingua mentalis*, see Willigis Eckermann, *Wort und Wirklichkeit: Das Sprachverständnis in der Theologie Gregors von Rimini und sein Weiterwirken in der Augustinerschule* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1978), 106–28; further, *inter alios*, Joël Biard, "La science divine entre signification et vision chez Grégoire de Rimini," in *Vestigia, Imagines, Verba*, 393–408, at 399–401; and Stephan Meier-Oeser, "Mental Language and Mental Representation in Late Scholastic Logic," in *John Buridan and Beyond: Topics in the Language Sciences 1300–1700*, ed. Russell L. Friedman and Sten Ebbesen (Copenhagen: Reitzel 2004), 237–66, at 246–48. On Gregory's discussion of angelic language, see Roling, *Locutio*, 270–77.

to constitute a speech-act; they can contribute to this constitution only insofar as they are subject to an additional act coming from the will.[108]

Conclusion

Of the four major Late Medieval models of angelic speech that we have reviewed—the Thomist, the Aegidian, the Scotist, and the Ockhamist—the latter surely offers the most stripped-down approach to the problem. In the perfect speech of the angels, the act of thinking and the act of speaking are the same; every word thought is at the same time a word spoken. It is not surprising that Ockham's streamlined account should possess an initial plausibility for many thinkers, as it seemed best to capture the immediacy that one would expect from the sort of communication performed by purely spiritual beings such as angels. Yet, the question would not go away: is it not necessary to distinguish between speech and thought? Must we not maintain *some* sort of difference between the internal reality of the mind and its outward manifestations? Ockham had maintained that angelic speech lies beyond the grasp of the speaker's will, because cognitive acts—indeed, all events in the mental life of angels—possess an intrinsic perspicuity that lays them open to all hearers. Yet, is not speech supposed to be free? Must it not include the possibility of discretion and private conversation as well? The dissatisfaction expressed in objections such as these eventually led to a marginalization of Ockham's account of speech from the mainstream of thinking about such matters.

The Thomistic model presents an alternative that enjoyed considerable success on into the modern period. This is not surprising, given the many advantages it can claim to its credit. While anchoring the angel's speech in the intellect of the speaker, Thomas is able to maintain a distinction between the act of speaking and the act of thinking, which, as we have seen, he explains by introducing a decision of the will that initiates the transformation of the mental word into a spoken utterance.

The Thomistic account of angelic speech is compelling by reason of its simplicity and the scope of its explanatory power. At the same time, it raises questions of its own. After all, does it not pay insufficient attention to what we might call the "event-dimension" of speech as active disclosure? In my reading, the Scotist model seeks to address precisely this

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[108] Gregory of Rimini, *In Sent.* 2.9–10.1, ed. Damasus Trapp (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1979–1987), 5:213–14.

concern. For Scotus, in fact, speech rests upon interaction. Scotus also highlights the fact that speech occurs within the network formed by a linguistic community and involves real communication. This is not to say that Thomas would deny such aspects of speech. The point is simply that Scotus is much more concerned to stress the mutual enrichment with novel information that angels offer one another. To be sure, Scotus draws a clear conceptual distinction between speaking and hearing, which reminds us of the disadvantages attaching to the Scotist model. What about the hearer's free will? Does Scotus sufficiently defuse the charge that the concepts transmitted by the speaker are actually forced upon the hearer?

The fourth model of perfect language, Giles of Rome's account of angelic speech on the basis of mental signs, is able to meet most of these difficulties. Giles's proposal secures the distinction between speaking and thinking, and the give-and-take of transmitting and receiving signs provides for discretion, free will, interaction, and the clear distinction between speaker and hearer. Since the relationship between the signified and the sign that copies it can be falsified, at least in theory, we also have a simple explanation of how angels can lie. Finally, Giles's model overlaps more fully with human speech, which likewise rests upon semiotic relations, than all the other hypotheses about angelic locution we have examined.

Although we should be wary of any hasty attempt to apply medieval discussions to contemporary debates, or to venture on any premature comparison of the medieval *status quaestionis* with the development of current philosophy of language, the controversy about angelic speech carried on in the Middle Ages may, with all due caution, be seen as pitting an act-centered model of speech emphasizing speech as an event of communication against a model of language based primarily on knowledge. Just as Scotus's account finds a certain echo in the theories of language propounded by J. L. Austin and John Searle, so, too, Thomas's approach, *mutatis mutandis*, finds a certain counterpart in Noam Chomsky's universalism, which conceives of speech primarily as a mental entity. The fact that even in the Middle Ages similar approaches could be consistently developed in themselves, yet resist easy harmonization, demonstrates the timelessness of the antinomy they bring to expression.

There is another issue that I touched on only briefly above, but to which I should like to return here. This is the question of individual self-expression. For it might seem that speakers of an ideal language such as angels would be interested solely in exchanging impersonal or

supra-personal truth. All of the four Late Medieval thinkers we have examined would, of course, recognize that angels, being singulars, would also communicate as such. They would acknowledge, in other words, that angel X knows he is being addressed by angel Y, or vice versa, as the case may be. Nevertheless, the question remains as to whether the fact that it is angel Y—that it is Raphael or Michael—who is speaking adds anything of significance or interest to the information-content of his speech. It seems to me that even a thinker as attuned to individuality and communicative disclosure as Scotus does not quite get to the core of this question: If even angelic speech communicates supra-individual, universal *species*, how do we secure the individual self-expression of the respective speaker? Does angelic speech have any *personal* coloration that would allow us to perceive the individual character of the one speaking in addition to the *impersonal* information he conveys?

I would like to suggest that it is precisely on this question that the Aegidian account of angelic speech (which also has its weak points, as we saw in connection with the problem of meaning-conveyors) possesses an important advantage over its rivals. Its acknowledgment of the possible influence of personal criteria on the production of *signa* allows much more scope for something like individual self-expression, or even creativity, to add a significant component to the angelic speech-exchange above and beyond the conveying of impersonal information. By the same token, it even grants angels a capacity for the creation of metaphor. Giles thus forces us to ask whether the very nature of perfect speech itself might not have room for what we might call "plurivocity." Giles's model, with its account of semiotic abundance, gives us, I would argue, the conceptual tools to vindicate the goodness of Benjamin's "forest of languages," which, in my view, is the basis of the richness that belongs specifically to language.

Ever since the days of Gottlob Frege and Richard Montague, many philosophers have endeavored to work out an account of language free of all individual characteristics. This leads us to wonder whether there should not be a more generous acknowledgment of the legitimacy of this concern in the framework of the contemporary discussion as well. Is not the failure to take adequate account of it the reason why purely formal accounts of speech miss the essence of language and end up instead in the void? It seems to me, at any rate, that the power and flexibility of Giles's model of angelic speech, not to mention the great creativity it unleashed among its adherents, underscores the necessity of taking seriously in linguistic

philosophy both the individual characterization of language and semantic considerations in general. I would argue, in fact, that the medieval discussion makes it abundantly clear that it is at best extremely difficult to conceive of language independently of the category of signs. I take this as further proof of the contemporary relevance of Giles of Rome's model of angelic speech.

AUGUSTINE AND ANSELM ON ANGELIC SIN

Peter King

Augustine and Anselm form a common tradition in medieval thought about angelic sin, a tradition rooted in patristic thought and centered on their attempts to give a philosophically coherent account of moral choice. Augustine concentrates on the reasons for and causes of angelic sin, especially in reference to free will; Anselm adopts Augustine's analysis and extends it to issues about the rationality of sinful choice. Each takes Lucifer's primal sin to be the paradigm case. Lucifer, undistracted by bodily desires and unencumbered by history, committed the first moral misdeed in an entirely good universe newly created by an entirely good God. The challenge is to give a philosophical account that permits us to understand how the best and brightest of all angels nevertheless made a sinful choice in such uniformly positive circumstances.

1. *Augustine*

Augustine holds that all angels have the same nature, one which, like all natures and indeed like everything created by God, is good in itself.[1] Evil enters the world only through free choice, a point Augustine argues for at length in his *De libero arbitrio* and which is reiterated throughout his works.[2] Lucifer is the first and foremost among all sinners: *primus omnium peccatorum* (*ep*. 105.4.13), the first of the angels to fall (*in Ioh. eu.* 3.7). The sin of his followers, the so-called "bad angels," is marginally less severe because they were "persuaded" by Lucifer into their apostasy, even though

All translations are mine. Thanks to Anna Greco for advice and comments. Earlier versions of the section on Anselm were given at Cornell and at UCLA. Standard abbreviations for the works of Augustine are given in the *Augustinus-Lexikon*, edited by Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1986ff.), 1:XLIII–XLV.

[1] See, for instance, *uer. rel*. 13.26, *Gn. litt*. 3.24.37, *in Ioh. eu*. 42.10, *ciu*. 12.1–2 and 19.13, and *c. Iul*. 3.26.63 and 6.20.63.

[2] See any of Augustine's early anti-Manichaean writings, for instance, *c. Fel*. 2.11, or later writings such as *ciu*. 12.3, *corrept*. 10.27, or *c. Iul. imp*. 4.95.

their choice to follow Lucifer was completely voluntary.[3] Original Sin is an imitation—or better: a recapitulation—of diabolic sin (*pecc. mer.* 1.9.9 and 1.18.18), in which Lucifer exercises his persuasion through the serpent (*in Ioh. eu.* 52.7); human sin can thus be understood through the analysis of angelic sin. But not all angels chose to sin. Some did not follow Lucifer but chose, instead, to remain "in the will-to-justice" (*lib. arb.* 3.5.15.55), and these "good angels" were rewarded, by God's grace, with the steadfast will to love God ever after (*ciu.* 11.13). Some angels, then, did not sin, and their choice must be understood in tandem with the choice of those who did. But since the latter were followers of Lucifer, the philosophical problem reduces to the challenge of understanding Lucifer's primal sin.

Augustine takes on the challenge at length in *Gn. litt.* 11.13.17–11.25.33 and *ciu.* 12.1–7, which can be supplemented by other discussions and remarks scattered throughout his works. He concentrates on three issues: (1) the precise nature of Lucifer's primal sin; (2) the extent to which reasons and causes can be given for it; and (3) the knowledge that Lucifer might have had regarding it. We will take up each in turn.

1.1. *Pride, Envy, and Disobedience*

The patristic tradition that Augustine inherited did not have a unified view about the nature of Lucifer's primal sin.[4] The majority view, including Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Ambrose, held that Lucifer's sin was pride (*superbia*)—a view that took as its biblical warrant the verses addressed to Lucifer: "Thou hast said in thine heart: I shall ascend into Heaven; I shall exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I shall be like unto the Most High" (Is. 14:13–14).[5] The minority view, including Irenaeus, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Cyprian, held that Lucifer's sin was envy (*inuidia*), more specifically, envy of humanity for being created in the image of God.[6]

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[3] See *lib. arb.* 3.10.29.104. The seats they left vacant in Heaven will eventually be filled by saved human beings: *ench.* 9.29.

[4] For references to the patristic tradition, see William Green, "*Initium omnis peccati superbia*: Augustine on Pride as the First Sin," *The University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 13 (1949): 407–32; and, especially, Neil Adkin, "Pride or Envy? Some Notes on the Reason the Fathers Give for the Devil's Fall," *Augustiniana* 34 (1984): 349–51.

[5] See Origen, *Homily on Ezechiel* 9.2; Chrysostom, *Homily on Isaiah 6:1* 3.3; Jerome, *ep.* 12.2 and 69.9.6, *in Is.* 2.3.4; and Ambrose, *s.* 7.8 and 16.15. Other biblical passages adduced in support were Ez. 28:17 (see Jerome's commentary) and 1 Tim. 3:6.

[6] Irenaeus, *adu. haer.* 4.40.3; Tertullian, *adu. Marc.* 2.10; Cyprian, *zel.* 1–4. An earlier tradition, attested in the Book of Enoch, held that the sin of the fallen angels was *lust*: ". . . seeing the daughters of men, that they were fair . . ." (Gn. 6:1–4); Lucifer has no special role here. See Hilary of Poitiers, *in Ps.* 132.6; Ambrose, *uirg.* 1.8.53 and *ap. Dav.* 1.4.

Common to both views is the identification of Lucifer's sin with an occurrent psychological state: taking pride in himself, or being envious of humanity. These states involve both affective and cognitive factors: pride and envy are not simple feelings, the way anger or lust can be, since (as Augustine will argue) pride and envy involve comparative evaluations. Nor should they be confused with their corresponding character traits, "pridefulness" (or simply: "[being] proud") and enviousness, which are dispositions rather than occurrent states which they may make manifest.[7] Furthermore, pride and envy can be motives for action and thereby must be distinct from the actions they motivate. In the case of Lucifer, his pride or envy led him to openly rebel against God, so that his sin was also often said to be disobedience—a claim that preserves a structural parallel with Original Sin. In short, pride and envy are distinct from their associated character traits, on the one hand, and the actions to which they give rise, on the other, and they are constituted, at least in part, by complex emotions that depend on cognitive valuations.

These distinctions lay the groundwork for Augustine's attempt to reconcile the divergent views he found in the patristic tradition. His position is clear: Lucifer's primal sin is pride, which is logically prior to, but an immediate cause of, envy. He offers a compact argument for his position in *Gn. litt.* 11.14.18:[8]

> Some people say that the reason [Lucifer] fell from the heavenly realms was that he envied man being made in the image of God. But envy follows upon pride; it does not precede it. Envy is not the cause of occurrent pride, but pride the cause of occurrent envy. And so, since pride is the love of one's own superiority whereas enviousness is the hatred of someone else's well-being, it is sufficiently obvious which is born of which: anyone who loves his own superiority will envy either (*a*) his peers, for they are equal to him; (*b*) those below him, lest they be equal to him;[9] or (*c*) those above him, for

[7] They need not stem from underlying character traits at all, any more than an individual courageous act has to reflect a courageous disposition. This especially holds for Lucifer, who can hardly be held accountable for his character traits at the instant of his creation.

[8] "Nonnulli enim dicunt ipsum ei fuisse casum a supernis sedibus, quod inuiderit homini facto ad imaginem Dei. Porro autem inuidia sequitur superbiam, non praecedit; non enim causa superbiendi est inuidia, sed causa inuidendi superbia. Cum igitur superbia sit amor excellentiae propriae, inuidentia uero sit odium felicitatis alienae, quid unde nascatur satis in promptu est. Amando enim quisque excellentiam suam uel paribus inuidet quod ei coaequentur, uel inferioribus ne sibi coaequentur, uel superioribus quod eis non coaequetur. Superbiendo igitur inuidus, non inuidendo quisque superbus est." See also *c. Faust.* 22.17 and *en. Ps.* 139.8.

[9] Here "envy" is not quite flexible enough to catch the sense of the Latin *inuidia*, which means "having an invidious attitude"; someone proud will begrudge the possibility that those below him might become his equals someday.

> he is not equal to them. Hence a person is envious through the occurrence of pride, not proud through the occurrence of envy.

As Augustine memorably puts it, pride is the mother of envy.[10] The comparative evaluation at the heart of pride is a matter of rating oneself more highly than others, or, more exactly, taking delight in oneself in preference to others. "What else is pride but the perverse urge for superiority?" asks Augustine (*ciu.* 14.13).[11] Envy is the byproduct of such self-love, since the wellbeing of others makes it difficult to sustain the view that one is superior to them; and this is the source of the negative valuation of others, a form of hatred.[12] The particular case of Lucifer matches this analysis (*Gn. litt.* 11.13.17):[13]

> And so it happened that the spirit of this rational creature [Lucifer], taking delight in his own power on account of its superiority, swelled up with pride, through which he fell from the happiness of the spiritual paradise, and became consumed with enviousness.

Lucifer's invidious preference of himself to all others—including God—is implicit in Augustine's description of Lucifer's delight in his power as superior.

Yet, there is a difficulty. Augustine has identified Lucifer's primal sin as an occurrent psychological state, namely, his taking pleasure in a comparative evaluation of his own superiority *vis-à-vis* others. But what is morally objectionable in that? Lucifer has not done anything wrong—indeed, Lucifer has not done anything at all. Nor has he made any choices and, *a fortiori*, no reprehensible choices. His psychological state might lead to choice and to action, but it has not yet done so, and while it is true that he is in that state voluntarily, it is hard to see why thinking of himself as better than others deserves to be punished with eternal damnation or, for that matter, why it should merit punishment at all.

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[10] See *uirg.* 31.31, *s.* 354.5, and *s.* 399.7.

[11] "Quid est autem superbia nisi peruersae celsitudinis appetitus?"

[12] Again, our notion of "envy" does not quite capture the negative valuation at the heart of *inuidia*.

[13] "Atque ita factum esse ut rationalis creaturae spiritus, sua potestate propter excellentiam delectatus, tumesceret superbia, per quam caderet a beatitudine spiritalis paradisi, et inuidentia contabesceret."

Augustine's response to this difficulty is to insist that there is an important sense in which Lucifer's sin (*a*) must involve an act of will, and (*b*) is morally reprehensible in itself.[14]

With regard to (*a*): Augustine notes that pride essentially involves an evaluation—specifically, a comparative evaluation of one's own superiority relative to others. We might be tempted to analyze such an evaluation as being, in essence, a cognitive judgment, something that is primarily a matter of the intellect. However, Augustine thinks that an evaluation is at once a cognitive and an affective stance towards something as a good—more exactly, someone "sets up" a given object as a good for himself or herself by turning to it, the thought of it being accompanied by a *uoluntas* for it.[15] He sketches this process as early as *lib. arb*. 2.9.27.108:[16]

> There are many different goods from which a person selects what he wants: through seeing and grasping something for his enjoyment, he sets up the highest good for himself rightly and truly.

To grasp something for enjoyment just is to have a *uoluntas* towards it. Note that this need not rise to the level of a conscious choice. It is enough for having a *uoluntas* towards something that one "turn" to it, so to speak, and enjoy it, though remaining able to not do so. The key point to keep in mind is that this "turning" is an act of will and, as such, capable of bearing moral weight, as much as if it were an explicit choice.[17]

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[14] It is a fundamental part of Judeo-Christian moral teaching that some occurrent psychological states are morally blameworthy as such: think of, say, the absolute condemnation of coveting one's neighbor's goods. The strategy behind Augustine's response, as outlined here, is to establish that all such psychological states involve objectionable acts of will.

[15] Or perhaps the thought constitutes the *uoluntas*; Augustine is not clear. Note that in *ciu*. 14.9 he notoriously identifies the four basic Stoic passions, which the Stoics understood as forms of judgment, with distinct types of *uoluntates*.

[16] "Multa sunt bona eaque diuersa, e quibus eligat quisque quod uolet idque uidendo et tenendo ad fruendum summum sibi bonum recte uereque constituat." The same point is made earlier, when Augustine is describing how objects are neutral in themselves (*lib. arb*. 1.15.33.113): "Cum igitur eisdem rebus alius male alius bene utatur, et is quidem qui male, amore his inhereat atque implicetur—scilicet subditus eis rebus quas ei subditas esse oportebat, et ea bona sibi constituens quibus ordinandis beneque tractandis ipse esse utique deberet bonum." See also *ciu*. 12.8 for the same point.

[17] Given that one might have turned the will otherwise, it could be argued that the will's orientation is implicitly a choice, even though it need not be preceded by deliberation nor be the result of a decision. This is a stronger claim than Augustine needs, however, and it is compatible with the claims he does make, so we need not pursue the issue.

With regard to (*b*): When Augustine applies the general analysis of having a *uoluntas* to the particular case of pride, at one stroke he shows why Lucifer's sin is morally objectionable in itself (*lib. arb*. 3.24.72.249–50):[18]

> Pride turns away from wisdom . . . How does this turning away come about, if not in that he whose good is God wills to be his own good for himself, as if he were his own god?

Pride is having a *uoluntas* directed towards oneself. In the case at hand, Lucifer turns his will towards himself and thereby away from God. So it is that prideful self-love is morally objectionable: "self-love to the point of contempt for God" (*ciu*. 14.28), as Augustine puts it. Whereas the good angels turned their wills to God, and so remained with a *uoluntas* towards justice (*lib. arb*. 3.5.15.55; cf. 3.5.16.59), the bad angels "instead took delight in their own power, as though they were the good for themselves, falling away from the greater blessed good which is common to all" (*ciu*. 12.1);[19] they are made miserable by "this turning away from Him Who is the Highest and turning to themselves who are not the highest; what other name does this vice have but pride?" (*ciu*. 12.6).[20] Hence, the morally objectionable character of pride stems from apostasy, which is why pride is the first and the worst of all sins—a view Augustine finds support for in Sir. 10:14–15 (RSV 10:12–13): "The beginning of pride is when one departs from (*apostatare*) God, and his heart is drawn away from Him Who made him; for pride is the beginning of all sin."[21]

Augustine sums up his position in a concise yet elegant formulation that links disobedience with pride (*uer. rel*. 13.26):[22]

> That angel [Lucifer], delighting in himself rather than in God, was unwilling to be subject to Him and swollen with pride: he abandoned the Highest Essence, and he fell.

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[18] "Superbia enim auertit a sapientia . . . unde autem haec auersio nisi dum ille cui bonum est deus, sibi ipse uult esse bonum suum, sicuti sibi est deus?" Augustine is talking about Original Sin, but his point applies equally well to Lucifer's primal sin.

[19] "Alii sua potestate potius delectati, uelut bonum suum sibi ipsi essent, a superiore communi omnium beatifico bono ad propria defluxerunt . . ."

[20] ". . . Quod ab illo qui summe est auersi ad se ipsos conuersi sunt qui non summe sunt; et hoc uitium quid aliud quam superbia nuncupetur?"

[21] See also *s*. 159B11. Augustine argues in *Gn. litt*. 11.15.19 that Paul's claim that avarice is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10) is compatible with this, since "avarice" here should be understood broadly, as the effect of "ruinous self-love" in wanting to make something one's own (cf. *s*. 198.11). See also his discussion of this passage in *lib. arb*. 3.17.48.164–66, wherein Augustine concludes that "a wanton will (*uoluntas*) is the cause of all evils."

[22] "Ille autem angelus magis seipsum quam Deum diligendo, subditus ei esse noluit et intumuit per superbiam, et a summa essentia defecit, et lapsus est."

All the descriptions are equivalent. Lucifer's delight in himself rather than in God—which precisely *is* his occurrent state of pride—is also his act of turning away from God (to himself); and, plausibly, it is also his being unwilling to serve God, since this is what it is for Lucifer to delight in himself rather than in God. So it is that Augustine can say that Lucifer "became the devil through disobedience and pride" (*in Ioh. eu*. 42.10.5). Not keeping God as one's good is the fountainhead of all the vices (*en. Ps*. 18.2.15).

1.2. *Reasons and Causes*

Why did Lucifer turn his will from God? What could explain his pride in his finite and created being when faced with the infinite and uncreated majesty of God? What prospect could Lucifer have to set against the eternity of damnation?

We have already seen that Augustine cannot appeal to character traits to explain Lucifer's primal sin. No appeal to pre-existent motives satisfies the theological requirement that Lucifer be created good in all respects by a good God. (Nor does any appeal to features for which Lucifer is not himself responsible.) Putting motives aside, then, Augustine's position can be best stated by appealing to the distinction between reasons and causes: there are no causes that determine the will, but there may be reasons to which one might appeal in understanding the will, though they do not determine its action either. Some work is required to spell out why Augustine adopts this position.

In *lib. arb*. 3.25.75.258, Augustine asks: How did Lucifer come to think "that irreligiousness should be pursued," the thought[23] "by which he fell from the heights of Heaven"? Lucifer, being a pure spirit, was not affected in his thoughts by having a body, or even by anything physical. Augustine describes Lucifer's situation—really the situation of any angel—as follows (*lib. arb*. 3.25.76.261–62):[24]

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[23] Augustine initially calls this a "judgment" (*consilium*), which is his straightforward rendering of the Stoic κατάληψις. But he holds no allegiance to Stoic doctrine, for he immediately rephrases his question in a neutral manner: "How did whatever it is that entered his mind come to enter his mind?" (*lib. arb*. 3.25.75.259).

[24] "Ut autem in contemplatione summae sapientiae—quae utique animus non est, nam est incommutabilis—etiam se ipsum qui est commutabilis animus intueatur et sibi ipse quodam modo ueniat in mentem, non fit nisi differentia qua non est quod deus et tamen aliquid est quod possit placere post deum. Melior est autem cum obliuiscitur sui prae caritate incommutabilis dei uel se ipsum penitus in illius comparatione contemnit.

> In contemplating the highest wisdom—which is surely not the mind, for the highest wisdom is unchangeable—the mind (*animus*) looks upon itself, which is changeable, and in some way enters into its own mind (*mens*). This happens only in virtue of the difference by which the mind is not what God is, and yet it is something that can please, next to God. However, it is better if it forgets itself before the love of the unchangeable God, or sets itself completely at naught in comparison with Him. If instead [the mind] gets in its own way, so to speak, and is pleased to imitate God perversely so that it wills to enjoy its own power, it becomes lesser to precisely the extent that it desires itself to be greater.

An angel, then, has two immediate objects before its mind's eye: God and its own mind, which it knows to be different because the former is unchangeable and the latter changeable. Given this contrast, there are only two choices, namely, to direct the will to God or to direct it "to enjoy its own power," in which case the mind "gets in its own way" by obstructing the clear view of God, who is its proper object.

Augustine's suggestion that the mind gets in its own way fits well with his view that perverse self-love, preferring oneself to God, is the essence of pride, an identification he immediately goes on to make (*lib. arb.* 3.25.76.263). But more important for our purposes is to note what Augustine does not say here. In his description of the angelic situation, Augustine leaves it entirely open whether the will directs itself to God or to its own power. He is clear that it should do the former, of course. But it is perfectly able to do the latter. Hence the mind is not determined by its nature to orient itself towards God, even whilst having the Beatific Vision. Some angels do not do so, and thereby fall, with Lucifer in the lead.

There is no irresistible final cause, then, of the will's orientation. (If God cannot compel love then nothing less can do so.) In view of the will's freedom, Augustine argues, it has no efficient cause either—no efficient cause that determines it one way rather than another, that is. His interlocutor, Evodius, has been pressing the question why one angel sinned and another did not, despite having the same nature (*lib. arb.* 3.17.47.161–63). Augustine offers a tart reply (3.17.48.164–68):[25]

Si autem tamquam obuius sibi placet sibi ad peruerse imitandum deum ut potestate sua frui uelit, tanto fit minor quanto se cupit esse maiorem."

[25] "Quoniam uoluntas est causa peccati, tu autem causam ipsius uoluntatis inquiris, si hanc inuenire potuero, nonne causam etiam eius causae quae inuenta fuerit quaesiturus es? Et quis quaerendi modus, quis finis percontandi ac disserendi, cum te ultra radicem quaerere nihil oporteat? . . . Sed quae tandem esse poterit ante uoluntatem causa uoluntatis? Aut enim et ipsa uoluntas est et a radice ista uoluntatis non receditur, aut non est

> The will is the cause of sin, but you are searching for the cause of the will itself. If I were able to find this cause, are you not also going to ask about the cause of this cause that has been found? What will limit our investigation? What will be the end of our discussion and examination? . . . But what, in the end, could be the cause of the will *before* the will? Either it is the will itself, in which case there is no getting around this root of the will, or it is not the will, in which case it has no sin.

Free will is completely self-determining, or, as Augustine puts the point in *lib. arb*. 1.12.26.86 and 3.3.7.27, "what is so much in the power of the will as the will itself"? On pain of infinite regress, there cannot be any prior cause or ground that determines the will in its free choices. The freedom involved in free choice must therefore be radical freedom, such that nothing whatever can determine its choice. In particular, the will is not bound to do whatever the agent thinks it best to do. For Augustine, the freedom of moral agents is bound up with their ability to be weak-willed or even perverse, doing the wrong thing for no reason at all. Such is the radical freedom of the will.

Augustine reiterates his arguments in *ciu*. 12.6–7, declaring at the outset that "if we seek an efficient cause of the evil *uoluntas* of the bad angels, we shall find none." When he draws his final conclusion, however, he gives in to the temptations of rhetoric and phrases it in a misleading way: "Hence let no one search for an efficient cause of an evil *uoluntas*, for its cause is not efficient but deficient, since it is not an effect but a defect" (*ciu*. 12.7). The view alludes, sensibly enough, to Augustine's ontological view that sin is not a genuine thing but rather the absence or privation of something, such as the failure of the will to turn to God. But it is wrong to take his rhetorical rhyme seriously, to think that alongside efficient causes there are also "deficient causes." The deficiencies in question are not prior to, and somehow causal grounds determining, the (evil) will; they are instead features of the (evil) will itself, namely, its failure to do something in some fashion.[26] The point at issue, though, is whether there are efficient causes that determine the will's actions. For all the talk of deficiencies, Augustine is clear that there are no such causes.

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uoluntas et peccatum nullum habet." For a careful discussion of these passages, see Simon Harrison, *Augustine's Way Into the Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[26] Scott MacDonald explores the ways in which morally objectionable acts can be the result of such failures; see his "Primal Sin," in *The Augustinian Tradition*, ed. Gareth Matthews (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1998), 110–39.

Now Augustine's denial that there are determining causes of the will does not entail that the will's actions are inexplicable or somehow not tied to the agent.[27] Augustine clearly allows that there are *reasons* for action that help us to understand it, although they do not determine the action.[28] In the case of Lucifer's primal sin, for instance, Augustine has been careful to insist that the reason Lucifer fell was his pride, that is, taking delight in himself rather than in God. But Lucifer equally might not have done so; many angels did not.

Reasons can be given, then, in support of an action, which however do not determine it. Does a reason in support of an action, then, *explain* that action? There is a point here beyond mere terminology, and one of Augustine's examples will clarify it. In *ciu*. 12.6, Augustine puts forward the case of two men "alike in mind and body" who see a woman with a beautiful body; "one is moved to enjoy her illicitly whereas the other remains constant in his chaste will." But how is it that they respond differently? They see the same woman, they are like-minded in all relevant respects, neither is more subject to physical arousal than the other. Augustine concludes:[29]

> If both of them are tempted equally, and one gives in and consents while the other remains the same as he was, what else is clear but that one was willing to give up his chastity and the other one was unwilling to do so?

We can give reasons why each man acts the way he does. Augustine is careful to spell them out: one man is moved to lust because of the woman's beauty, the other is not because he values his chastity. But—and this is Augustine's point—the behavior of each is explicable in terms of reasons, but in the end, all we can say is that this man took this as the reason for his action, whereas the other man took that as the reason for his action. And that is simply to say that each chose as he did, without any further explanation being possible. In Augustine's view, then, the radical freedom of the will is a double-edged sword. It makes moral agency possible, but it

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[27] See William Babcock, "Augustine on Sin and Moral Agency," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 16 (1988): 28–55; and the criticisms of his position in MacDonald, "Primal Sin."

[28] The terminology of "reasons" here is mine; Augustine has often been misunderstood on these points, I think, because he did not have a regimented vocabulary for discussing the issues. But while my usage is contemporary, the distinction it draws is solidly grounded in Augustine's texts.

[29] "Si eadem temptatione ambo temptentur, et unus ei cedat atque consentiat, alter idem qui fuerat perseueret: quid aliud, nisi unum noluisse, alterum uoluisse a castitate deficere?"

also makes moral choice explicable only up to a point, the point at which a final choice is made.

Why did Lucifer turn his will away from God? There is no cause; he had his reasons, namely, his love of himself, but in the end that is just to say that he turned his *uoluntas* to himself rather than God. Primal sin is precisely as explicable as any other action—and precisely as inexplicable, as well.

1.3. *Foreknowledge*

Augustine holds that Lucifer fell in the instant of his creation, at the beginning of time (*Gn. litt.* 11.16.21). He summarizes his view as follows (*Gn. litt.* 11.23.30):[30]

> Yet as soon as [Lucifer] was made he turned away from the light of truth, swollen with pride and corrupted by delight in his own power. Accordingly, he did not taste the sweetness of the happy angelic life. Surely he did not receive it and turn up his nose at it; rather, being unwilling to receive it, he turned his back on it and lost it.

Lucifer could not have shared in angelic happiness for any length of time, not even for a moment, because such happiness requires foreknowledge that Lucifer could not have had, namely, foreknowledge regarding his fall. Augustine lays out the criteria for the happiness of an intellectual being in *ciu.* 11.13: (*a*) uninterrupted enjoyment of God; and (*b*) the assurance, free from any doubt or error, that it will do so forever.[31] Lucifer cannot satisfy (*b*), since he will not in fact continue in (*a*). What, then, is Lucifer's epistemic status when he commits primal sin?

This question leads to a dilemma, one never finally resolved by Augustine. He sets it out in *Gn. litt.* 11.17.22 as follows.[32] Either Lucifer knows

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[30] "Sed factus continuo se a luce ueritatis auertit, superbia tumidus et propriae potestatis delectatione corruptus. Unde beatae atque angelicae uitae dulcidinem non gustauit: quam non utique acceptam fastidiuit, sed nolendo accipere deseruit et amisit."

[31] "Quocirca cuiuis iam non difficulter occurrit utroque coniuncto effici beatitudinem quam recto proposito intellectualis natura desiderat, hoc est, ut et bono incommutabili, quod Deus est, sine ulla molestia perfruatur et in eo se in aeternum esse mansurum nec ulla dubitatione cunctetur nec ullo errore fallatur." That happiness must contain its own guarantee is a common theme in Augustine.

[32] Augustine restates the logic of the dilemma in *Gn. litt.* 11.25.33, sketching it in *ciu.* 11.13 and *corrept.* 10.27. He recounts the problem for Jerome in *ep.* 73.3.7, declaring that he has no solution (which Frederick van Fleteren mistakenly reads as saying that Lucifer did have foreknowledge of his fall; see his "Devil," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopaedia*, ed. Alan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, Mich., and Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 268a–269a.

when he is created that he is going to fall, or not. If he knows that he is going to fall, then, Augustine reasons, he cannot be happy, in light of his knowledge that his present exalted status will come to an end and be replaced by eternal damnation. Therefore, Lucifer must not know that he is going to fall. But now we can legitimately ask: Why not? There are two possibilities. Either none of the angels knew what their future status would be, or some did and others, including Lucifer, did not. Suppose first that none of the angels knew what their future status would be. But then, Augustine claims, none of the angels could actually be happy, since none of them would know that they would not lose their present status for some other condition, perhaps even damnation. Even if *knowing that you are going to fall* is worse than *not knowing that you are not going to fall*, either is enough to spoil the prospect of happiness. Hence, we have to turn to the other possibility, namely, that some angels (who would turn out to be the good angels) were assured of their future happiness, while others (who would turn out to be the bad angels) did not know about their upcoming fall. But this possibility runs into theological obstacles, since it would mean that some angels had only second-class status in Heaven—among whom would be Lucifer, supposedly the best of them all; worse yet, there is no scriptural support for postulating second-class angels (*Gn. litt*. 11.19.26; *ep*. 73.3.7). As Augustine says in *ciu*. 11.13, it is hard to believe that only some angels could be ignorant of their future status.

In *Gn. litt.* 11.19.26, Augustine floats the idea that the dilemma might be avoided by supposing that the moment of choice for the angels was the very instant of their creation, "so that there was no time at which the angels were uncertain of their happiness." But the dilemma can simply be pushed back to the instant of the creation of angels: were they all ignorant of their future state when created, or were only some of them ignorant and others assured? Augustine acknowledges that the dilemma has not been resolved in *Gn. litt*. 11.25.33, where he confesses he does not know what the correct solution should be. In later discussions, he says that the bad angels did not know of their future fall, but he acknowledges the dilemma (*ciu*. 11.13 and *corrept.* 10.27). The best answer that can be given on Augustine's behalf, I think, is to opt for the view that none of the angels knew of their future status at the instant of their creation, which is the very moment when they could exercise their freedom to turn their wills as they pleased; those who kept their wills directed to God were rewarded with both eternal happiness and knowledge of their eternal happiness, whereas those who did not were damned. (Indeed, this is what Augustine usually says in his later works.) Hence, at the moment of their creation

and ever after, the good angels are assured of their happiness, and the bad angels were not—as Augustine says, they turned their back on the gift of eternal happiness and so lost it, never having received it.

2. *Anselm*

Anselm adopts Augustine's views about angelic sin, extending them in his remarkable dialogue devoted to the topic: *De casu diaboli*. He formalizes the contrast Augustine draws between the conflicting impulses for seeking one's own good and for doing what is right into his so-called "two-wills" theory of motivation: every moral agent, Anselm argues, has two fundamental kinds of motives, the will-for-justice (*uoluntas iustitiae*) and the will-for-advantage (*uoluntas commodi*), as he calls them (*diab*. 12–14).[33] Put another way, Anselm maintains that moral agency requires two distinct sources of motivation: the motive to do the right thing, seeing oneself as standing under moral norms; and a different nonmoral motivation that may conflict with the demands of morality. Only when an agent is capable of being motivated to act in ways that conflict with moral norms, and yet equally capable of recognizing his actions as being bound by moral norms, can there be moral agency, a genuine choice between doing the right thing (because it is right) or doing something other than the right thing (for its intrinsic appeal). The glory and the tragedy of rational natures, human and angelic, is that their happiness may diverge from what they ought to do: that is what makes it possible for them to be moral agents, to do the right thing because it is right, but also to do the wrong thing.

Having two distinct sources of motivation is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for an action to be morally praiseworthy or blameworthy. At least two further conditions have to be met: the agent must neither be (*a*) ignorant, at least not culpably ignorant; nor (*b*) irrational. In the former case, the lack of knowledge that the agent is not at fault for not possessing serves to excuse the agent, who then deserves instruction rather

[33] By the time he came to write his *De concordia*, Anselm clarified and refined his theory. In *conc*. 3.11, he draws a distinction among (*a*) the nature of an instrument; (*b*) what the instrument is suited for, its "dispositions" (*aptitudines*); and (*c*) its actual deployed use. Anselm argues that the faculty of the will, the (psychological) "instrument" of choice, is a single unitary item which is clearly the power behind its occurrent volitions or "uses." The two types of motivation canvassed in the *De casu diaboli* are here aligned with the unitary psychological faculty of the will as its "affections": permanent dispositions to respond positively to their proper objects, namely, *justice* (or *uprightness*) and *advantage*, which exhaust all motives for action.

than punishment. In the latter case, treatment rather than punishment is the appropriate response.

Anselm takes up (*b*) for extended analysis in the remainder of the dialogue. Augustine had sidestepped the issue of Lucifer's rationality, and, although he touched upon Lucifer's epistemic status in discussing foreknowledge, he did not explore it. Anselm intends to show that Lucifer was fully qualified as a moral agent and, therefore, could be held responsible for his primal sin—and justly punished for it. This is Anselm's main innovation over Augustine, and it is quite an original accomplishment, among other things anticipating contemporary decision theory.

Like any other moral agent, Lucifer is motivated by his will-to-justice and his will-to-advantage, which are at work in the case of primal sin, which Anselm treats at length in *diab*. 21–25 (with a brief coda in §27). To simplify the exposition, I will speak as though the choice Lucifer faces is whether to "exalt his throne" above God's (as suggested in Is. 14:13). Anselm puts forward four theses about Lucifer's epistemic status:

[L1] Lucifer did not know what he would decide when faced with his choice (namely, whether to exalt his throne above God's).
[L2] Lucifer knew that he ought not exalt his throne above God's.
[L3] Lucifer knew that he would deserve punishment for exalting his throne, or, more exactly, for willing that his throne be exalted above God's.
[L4] Lucifer did not know that he would be punished if he were to will that his throne be exalted above God's.

Anselm argues for [L1] in §21, [L2] and [L3] in §22, and [L4] in §23. Each deserves comment.

With regard to [L1]: Anselm in fact argues in §21 for a stronger thesis, namely, that Lucifer could not have had any grounds for suspicion (*qualibet suspicione*) of what he would do when faced with his choice, much less have had foreknowledge of his choice. We will return to Anselm's stronger thesis when we consider [L4]. His case against foreknowledge is straightforward: if Lucifer were to know what he is going to do, then it is not at all clear that he faces a genuine choice, or even that he is free. Anselm wants to put these sorts of worries aside so as to concentrate on Lucifer's rationality.

With regard to [L2]: Anselm argues in §22 that if Lucifer did not know that the action he was contemplating was morally wrong, and so ought not to be done, then Lucifer would have been ignorant rather than blameworthy. But the wrongfulness of exalting his throne above God's could not have escaped his notice, since Lucifer "was so rational that nothing got in

the way of the use of his reason" (such as having a physical body: §23) and thus "he was not ignorant of what he ought to will or ought not to will."[34] Therefore, if Lucifer was indeed ignorant, he was culpably so. But there is no reason to think he was ignorant at all.

With regard to [L3]: Recognizing the wrongfulness of an action, as Anselm observes in §22, is equivalent to recognizing that performing the action deserves punishment—or, put another way, moral wrongfulness is analytically tied to deserving punishment. (Whether the punishment should be inflicted is a separate question.) Taken together, [L1]–[L3] seem to make it impossible that Lucifer, who, after all, supposedly acted on his will-for-advantage, should opt to exalt his throne above God's. Hence, the case for Lucifer's rationality in so doing is found in Anselm's analysis and defense of [L4].

With regard to [L4]: We have already established that Lucifer knew that he ought not exalt his throne above God's, and that in doing so he would merit punishment. Now, [L4] says that Lucifer does not know that, if he were to exalt his throne above God's, he then *would* receive the punishment that by [L3] he admittedly deserves. (If he knew that he would be punished for having sinned, then it would clearly be irrational for him to sin.) It is well worth considering Anselm's argument for [L4] in detail.

Anselm begins by pointing that although Lucifer is aware of [L3], it does not follow that he knows what God would in fact do:[35]

> Since [Lucifer] was rational, he was indeed able to grasp that he would justly be punished if he were to sin. But since "many of God's judgments are deep" [Ps. 35:7 (RSV 36:6)] and "His ways are past finding out" [Rom. 11:33], he was not able to figure out whether God would do what He could justly do.

Since God's ways are "past finding out" (*inuestigabiles*, literally "untrackable" or "not able to be followed"), Lucifer cannot replicate God's reasoning for himself. But why not? After all, Lucifer knows that God is entitled to punish moral transgressions, and presumably he knows that God is

[34] "Denique quoniam ita rationalis erat, ut nulla re prohiberetur uti ratione, non ignorabat quid deberet aut non deberet uelle." There are interesting questions about moral knowledge and its extent, but Anselm does not take them to be at issue in the case of primal sin.

[35] "Quia rationalis erat, potuit intelligere quia iuste si peccaret puniretur; sed quoniam 'iudicia' dei 'abyssus multa' 'et inuestigabiles uiae eius,' nequiuit comprehendere an deus faceret quod iuste facere posset."

just. Yet, Lucifer knows something else about God, as Anselm goes on to remark:[36]

> But someone might point out that Lucifer could not in any way believe that God was going to damn His creature on account of that fault, the creature He had made in His great goodness, above all because there had not been any example of paying back an injustice with justice . . .

Anselm's point here is that Lucifer knows not only that God is just but also that God is merciful. (The word "mercy" does not appear here, but that is clearly what is at stake in the discussion.) Yet, given that God is both just and merciful, which of these attributes will guide his response to a wrongdoing?

If Lucifer is rational, then he must think that the likelihood of God showing him mercy is at least as good as the likelihood of God punishing him for his transgression. For, as Anselm remarks, Lucifer did not have any evidence about how God would, in fact, respond to cases of wrongdoing; "there had not been any example" before. Lucifer is therefore facing a choice under uncertainty, and, in the absence of evidence about how to assign probabilities to the elements of an exhaustive partition of the outcomes, the rational thing to do—or so modern decision theory maintains—is to treat the possible outcomes as equiprobable. Since there are only two outcomes in question here, Lucifer treats God's response as a coin toss: 50% probability of God's being just, and 50% probability of God's being merciful. If anything, Anselm goes on to note, Lucifer might have thought the odds favored his being forgiven, since Lucifer might have reasoned that God had created exactly the correct number of angels to fill the heavenly choir and that casting out angels as punishment would leave empty seats behind; he could not reasonably have foreseen that God would fill the empty seats with saved human beings.[37] Nor could Lucifer have reasoned that God would have to punish wrongdoing at some point so as to set an example for others; rather than by setting an example, God might equally well have made it known that he might punish wrongdoing simply by informing the angels (§25). Anselm thus concludes that there would be no irrationality (*inconuenientia*) in Lucifer's reasoning.

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[36] "Sed et si quis dicat quia nullatenus credere potuit deum creaturam suam propter eius culpam damnaturum, quam tanta sua bonitate fecerat—praesertim cum nullum exemplum iustitiae ulciscentis iniustitiam praecessisset . . ."

[37] Anselm takes these views about the number of the heavenly host and God's replacement of fallen angels with saved human beings from Augustine, as noted at the start of section 1 above.

But what does irrationality amount to, in the context of reasoning about what course of action to adopt? Anselm immediately tells us in §23:[38]

> Let us return to what we had said [in §21], namely, that Lucifer must not have had this knowledge [that God would punish him]. For if he were to have known, then, while willing and possessing his happiness, he would not have been able to will of his own accord that whereby he would be unhappy.

Lucifer would be irrational if he believed that as a result of his voluntary action he would be less happy than he is. Anselm takes it as a minimal constraint on rationality, then, that an agent not do anything he believes is likely to make him less happy than he might otherwise be. In other words, an agent has to compare the expected utility of the outcomes[39] in order to make a rational choice; it would be irrational to choose any course of action whose expected utility is less than the expected utility of an alternative action.[40]

That this is the correct way to read the passage is borne out by Anselm's second argument in §21 (the reference to which in §23 is secured by Anselm's use of the pluperfect), the conclusion of which Anselm states as follows:[41]

> Now since it is clear by the argument given above that the apostate angel could not have foreknown his downfall by the sort of foreknowledge which is consequent upon the necessity of the matter, consider yet a further argument that excludes his having any presentiment of his fall not only by foreknowledge but even by reckoning or by any suspicion.

Lucifer not only must lack foreknowledge of his fall, as Augustine and [L1] declared, he cannot know about it through *aestimatio* or *suspicio*. Now, *aestimatio* ("reckoning") means an assessment of the value of something,

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[38] "Redeamus ad hoc quod dixeram, illum scilicet hanc non debuisse habere scientiam. Si enim sciuisset, non posset uolens et habens beatitudinem sponte uelle unde miser *esset*."

[39] The expected utility ε_i of the i-th outcome is the product of its probability p_i and its utility u_i, namely, $\varepsilon_i = p_i u_i$. We are only dealing with subjective probabilities here, from Lucifer's point of view.

[40] This formulation entails that an agent must seek to maximize his expected utility, on pain of irrationality. Anselm's way of putting the point is slightly weaker, since it only holds that it would be irrational to adopt a course of action whose expected utility is worse than not adopting that course of action (i.e., of standing pat).

[41] "Nunc autem quoniam supra posita ratione patet apostatam angelum non potuisse praescire ruinam suam ea praescientia quam rei sequitur necessitas, accipe adhuc aliam rationem, quae non solum praescientia sed et aestimatione aut qualibet suspicione suum eum praesensisse casum excludit."

a summing-up of its worth; the sense of Anselm's claim is that Lucifer cannot have calculated that the expected (negative) utility of the outcome in which God exercises his justice, namely, his punishment, outweighs the expected utility of the outcome in which God exercises his mercy, no matter by how little (*suspicio*). Hence the gamble that Lucifer takes is rational only if it conforms to this criterion.

Anselm says little about the utility of the outcomes, for the simple reason that he takes it to be obvious: if Hell is the deprivation of the happiness of Heaven, as Augustine maintained, then the disutility of punishment is the negative value of the utility of being in Heaven. (If we add to the utility of being in Heaven the further utility of exalting one's throne above God's, even if only briefly, the scales are tipped in the direction of being in Heaven.) Thus, as long as the probability of punishment is no greater than the probability of forgiveness, the utilities of the expected outcomes will balance as well. If Lucifer has reason to believe that it is more likely that he will be forgiven rather than punished, based on his reasoning from the number of the heavenly host, then the gamble will look better and better to him.

Should Lucifer accept the gamble? There is one more factor that has to be taken into account, namely, whether it is better to take the gamble or to stand pat. There is no consensus about when it is rational to accept or decline a gamble, since that depends on attitudes toward risk, and no principle governing the rationality of risk-taking has met with general agreement: maximin, minimax, or the like. We can say, however, that it would be irrational to accept a gamble if its expected utility does not outweigh the utility of standing pat. In the case of primal sin, the question is whether the expected utility of Lucifer's exalting his throne above God's outweighs the assured utility of standing pat. (This is how Anselm formulated the rationality constraint earlier.) It is plausible to think that the delight of having such an exalted throne would outweigh, perhaps infinitely outweigh, maintaining one's merely subordinate angelic status. So, Anselm assumes in the argument with which he concludes §23:[42]

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[42] "Magister: Sed et hac ratione considera utrum scire quod quaeris debuerit. Nam si scisset, aut peccasset aut non.—Discipulus: Unum horum esset.—M.: Si praeuisa tanta poena nulla indigentia et nulla re cogente peccasset, tanto magis puniendus esset.—D.: Ita est.—M.: Non ergo haec praescientia illi expediebat.—D.: Vere peccaturo non expediebat praescire poenam.—M.: Quod si non peccasset: aut sola bona non peccasset uoluntate, aut timore poenae.—D.: Nihil aliud dici potest.—M.: Sed quoniam peccatum non cauisset solo amore iustitiae, ipso opere monstrauit.—D.: Non est dubium.—M.: Si uero timore

MASTER: But consider also whether by this very argument Lucifer should have known what you are asking about [namely, that he would be punished for sinning]. For if he had known, either (*a*) he would have sinned, or (*b*) not.
STUDENT: Yes.
MASTER: [With regard to (*a*)]: If he had sinned having foreseen so great a punishment, without any need and with nothing forcing him, then so much the more ought he to be punished.
STUDENT: That is so.
MASTER: Therefore, this foreknowledge did not help him.
STUDENT: Truly, foreknowledge of punishment does not help one who is going to sin.
MASTER: [With regard to (*b*)]: Well, if he had not sinned, he would have refrained from sinning either (b_1) due solely to his good will, or (b_2) due to his fear of punishment.
STUDENT: Exactly so.
MASTER: But he showed by his very deed that he would not have avoided sinning due solely to the love of justice.
STUDENT: Certainly.
MASTER: But if he avoided it due to fear, he would not be just.
STUDENT: It is clear that in no way could Lucifer have known that his punishment was going to be visited upon him as a result of his sin.

Does Anselm's argument answer the student's question about [L4]? Anselm here argues that it does. If Lucifer had known that if he were to sin he would be punished, it would be irrational for him to sin, and he would be all the more reprehensible for knowing the consequences; that is the gist of (*a*). More interesting is Anselm's argument regarding (*b*), which is Lucifer's alternative of standing pat—of having assessed the rationality of the gamble and declining to take it. We know from the actual course of events that Lucifer was not motivated solely by the will-for-justice, and, hence, even if he had avoided sinning, he would not have done so due solely to the will-for-justice. However, standing pat because of fear is not being just; doing the "right" thing for the wrong reason is not to do the right thing at all but to be morally reprehensible—arguably just as much as if one had done the wrong thing anyway. We will return to that point in a moment, but note that the student is only entitled to draw his conclusion, namely, that Lucifer would not have known (or been able to calculate) that he would be punished as a result of his sin, if

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cauisset, non esset iustus.—D.: Palam est nullo modo eum debuisse scire inditam sibi poenam suum secuturam peccatum."

Lucifer is acting out of his assessment of the expected utilities of the alternatives, including standing pat. We know that in the actual case, Lucifer took the gamble (and lost), which would be rational only if the assured utility of standing pat were not to outweigh the expected utility of taking the gamble. If he were not to have taken the gamble, (b_2), his reason would not have been the admirable moral motive of wanting to do the right thing, but his fear that the gamble was too risky to take (by whatever standards of risk Lucifer adopted)—that the assured utility of standing pat outweighed the expected utility of accepting the gamble, taking its riskiness into account. Even in the counterfactual case in which Lucifer declines the gamble, his behavior would be rational, as we know it must have been in the actual case.

In the actual case, as Anselm notes, we can read off Lucifer's motive from his actions: primal sin is a case of acting on the will-for-advantage. Lucifer has already done the wrong thing by treating a moral choice as an exercise in calculation. Yet, Lucifer's primal sin is perfectly rational in such terms. This is the point Anselm wants to drive home. Lucifer is not irrational. Rather, he is immoral. His rationality is a prerequisite for his immorality, in that we can legitimately punish him for his actions only if they are rational. Mad as his gamble may seem in retrospect, it was not irrational of Lucifer to accept it. It was, however, immoral.

Anselm, therefore, has shown how Lucifer's primal sin can be rational. Yet, since there are two motivational sources for action, the rationality of an action need not coincide with its moral acceptability. In the end, Anselm holds, Augustine's view about radical freedom is correct; even the rationality of a choice does not determine that it will be made (§27):[43]

> STUDENT: Why did Lucifer will what he ought not?
> MASTER: No cause preceded this will, other than that he could so will . . .
> STUDENT: Then why did he will it?
> MASTER: Merely because he willed it. For this will had no other cause by which it was pushed or pulled. Rather, it was its own efficient cause, so to speak, and its own effect.

There is a limit to our ability to explain free choices; the existence of the will-for-justice alongside the will-for-advantage ensures that we are never

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[43] "D.: Cur uoluit quod non debuit?—M.: Nulla causa praecessit hanc uoluntatem, nisi quia uelle potuit. . . . D.: Cur ergo uoluit?—M.: Non nisi quia uoluit. Nam haec uoluntas nullam aliam habuit causam qua impelleretur aliquatenus aut attraheretur sed ipsa sibi efficiens causa fuit, si dici potest, et effectum."

determined to act in any particular way, even when it is rational (in the narrow sense appropriate to calculating advantage) to do so. After all, as Anselm argues in §24, the good angels are in precisely the same epistemic situation as Lucifer, and yet they do not sin.

Anselm is clearly at pains to make his account fully compatible with Augustine, cleaning up and extending Augustine's views. Together their work defines a distinct tradition in the treatment of angelic sin, one that would be extremely influential in the later Middle Ages—as Tobias Hoffmann's essay in this volume will attest.

THEORIES OF ANGELIC SIN FROM AQUINAS TO OCKHAM

Tobias Hoffmann

By the thirteenth century, theologians had reached a consensus regarding the basic narrative of angelic sin: God created angels as intellectual creatures that had no inclination whatever to evil. Yet, soon after creation, Lucifer, then the highest creature, committed the sin of pride by desiring equality with God. Other angels followed him into rebellion and fell with him into a state of never-ending misery. Those angels who chose to remain upright entered an irreversible state of blessedness which consists in the beatific vision of God.[1]

This narrative, which is based upon a few clues contained in Scripture along with some authoritative glosses, prompted the medievals to pursue a number of theological and philosophical questions. The present chapter focuses on two standard questions that are of philosophical import: first, how the angels could sin; second, why their bad choice was irreversible. In answering these questions, the Scholastics addressed several issues that were at the core of the medieval debate about *liberum arbitrium* (free decision) and that are still central in the contemporary free will debate. The problem of angelic sin pressed them harder than any other problem to clarify the relationship between knowledge and desire, or between intellect and will, for it is the supreme test case for whether intellectualism implies intellectual determinism and whether voluntarism implies irrationality. Concerning the initial good or bad choice, most medieval thinkers took an incompatibilist stance, while they were compatibilists with regard to the freedom experienced in the definitive states of happiness or misery. In other words, at first, their freedom to sin or not to sin was incompatible with determinism; after the choice, however, the good

I am grateful to John Makdisi and Thérèse Cory for excellent critical comments on an earlier draft, and to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for support while doing research on this essay.

[1] The fundamental points of this narrative are summarized by Peter Lombard. While Lombard for the most part transmits the traditional account, he also sets his own accents; see *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* 2.3.4 – 2.7.4, 3rd ed. (Grottaferrata, Rome: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1971), 1:343–61. For discussion, see Marcia L. Colish, "Early Scholastic Angelology," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 67 (1995): 80–109, at 88–89.

angels were no longer able to sin and the bad angels no longer able not to sin, and yet they still remained free in a certain sense.

The main goal of this chapter is to examine how—given the ideal psychological conditions of the angels—a single theory of intellect and will can accommodate these two opposite demands: explaining alternative possibilities in the angelic good or evil choice, and explaining the lack of alternative possibilities after the angels made this choice. A further, more general goal is to show that the subtlety of scholastic theories of moral psychology and ethics cannot be fully appreciated apart from their explanations of angelic sin. Among the ideas that are either originally developed or further deepened in the medieval accounts of angelic sin are clear-eyed *akrasia* (that is, acting contrary to one's better judgment with full knowledge), voluntarist explanations of error, synchronic contingency (that is, alternative possibilities at the very moment one chooses an alternative), compatibilism of determinism and freedom, abandonment of eudaimonism, and God's causality with respect to evil acts.[2]

This essay begins with Aquinas, because his account of angelic sin is the first in which the highly stimulating and challenging impact of Aristotle is clearly felt.[3] To be sure, the medievals did not take Aristotle as an authority on the issue of angelic sin itself; in fact, his pure intelligences cannot have defective actions, because they are always in act.[4] But Aristotle's

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[2] Secondary literature on the philosophical aspects of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century explanations of angelic sin is sparse. For a brief overview, see Alain Boureau, *Satan hérétique: naissance de la démonologie dans l'Occident Médiéval (1280–1330)* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004), translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan as *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), ch. 4. The underlying debate on free decision, however, has received considerable attention. See Odon Lottin, "Libre arbitre et liberté depuis saint Anselme jusqu'à la fin du XIIIe siècle," in *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, 2nd ed. (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1957), 11–389; Ernst Stadter, *Psychologie und Metaphysik der menschlichen Freiheit: Die ideengeschichtliche Entwicklung zwischen Bonaventura und Duns Scotus* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1971); François-Xavier Putallaz, *Insolente liberté: controverses et condamnations au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1995); Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995); and Peter S. Eardley, "The Foundations of Freedom in Later Medieval Philosophy: Giles of Rome and his Contemporaries," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 44 (2006): 353–76.

[3] Bonaventure, who comments on the *Sentences* a little earlier than Aquinas, still has a very traditional account of angelic sin; see *In Sent.* 2.3 pars 2 – 2.7 pars 1, *Opera omnia* (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1882–1902) 2:112–88; see also Barbara Faes de Mottoni, "Bonaventura e la caduta degli angeli," *Doctor Seraphicus* 38 (1991): 97–113.

[4] The intelligences, which are the movers of the celestial spheres, are immobile; see *Metaphysics* 12.8.1073a32–34. It is striking that medieval treatises on angelology seldom discuss this position of Aristotle. But William of Auvergne gives it some attention; see *De*

accounts of choice, incontinence, and contingency became important points of reference in medieval discussions of angelic sin. Traditional questions, such as whether the sin of angels was one of pride, were still discussed, but they were no more than the springboard for philosophical considerations about the nature of a primal sin. Even more important, the reception of Aristotle had a huge impact on the debate concerning free decision in general. More clearly than before, medieval thinkers were now divided into two camps that passionately opposed each other: intellectualists, who followed Aristotle's action theory quite closely; and voluntarists, who rejected some of its fundamental principles. The positions taken with regard to free decision were reflected in discussions of angelic sin, and these in turn contributed to the refinement of the accounts of free decision. In terms of the philosophical payout, the discussions of angelic sin became significantly more fruitful when these doctrinal developments prompted by Aristotle were taking place. The issue now was to develop a robust account of practical rationality that would allow for wickedness under perfect knowledge conditions and that would avoid reducing moral evil to a cognitive mistake.

Aquinas's account of angelic sin had a great impact on the subsequent debate on angelic sin and, more widely, on free decision. The first part of this essay will treat the fall of the devils, the second their obstinacy. Each part considers, in addition to Aquinas's solution, those positions that were most original and significant, up to the early fourteenth century.

1. *How is Angelic Sin Possible?*

Medieval discussions of the possibility of angelic sin addressed two issues at once. First, the question that occupied Augustine's mind: How could moral evil enter into a universe that was entirely good? Second, the question posed by Greek intellectualism: Is it possible to do evil without an intellectual deficiency? The Scholastics dedicated most of their efforts to the second question, for if it is solved, the first is solved as well. Following Augustine, the consensus was that evil entered the world through free

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universo 2.2.40, *Opera omnia* (Paris, 1674; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963) 1:884a–b. Godfrey of Fontaines mentions the Aristotelian position briefly (he refers to it as the view of the "philosophers"); see *Quodl.* 6.7, ed. Maurice De Wulf and Jean Hoffmans, Philosophes Belges 3 (Leuven: Institut supérieur de philosophie de l'Université, 1914), 168.

acts of rational creatures.[5] Lucifer sinned first, then other angels, then Adam and Eve, and finally the human race born from them. So, to clarify the first origin of evil, as well as the possibility of evildoing under perfect knowledge conditions, the Scholastics asked how the will of an angel could become deficient. The answer depends on one's conception of the will's nature and its relation to the intellect.

1.1. *Thomas Aquinas: Combining Aristotelian and Augustinian Principles*

Although, unlike Aristotle, Aquinas thinks of the will as a power distinct from the intellect, his conception of the will as *appetitus rationalis* (rational desire) is more consistently Aristotelian than that of any earlier theologian.[6] The dominant view among earlier theologians was that the will is free to act either in accord with or against the judgment of reason. For Aquinas, by contrast, the will desires or chooses as reason judges. It is of the very nature of the will to be inclined to the known good (*bonum apprehensum*); when it pursues evil, it does so *sub ratione boni*, that is, insofar as something evil is perceived as good.[7] This implies that, for Aquinas, volitional defects (that is, sins) presuppose cognitive defects. He writes:

> Since the will concerns the good or the apparent good, the will is never moved to evil, unless that which is not good appears somehow to reason as good; therefore, the will would never tend to any evil, unless there is some ignorance or error in reason.[8]

Yet, this poses a problem for the explanation of angelic sin. In Aquinas's view, all natural knowledge was innate to the angels from creation, so they are not subject to ignorance (that is, lack of naturally accessible knowledge). Furthermore, Aquinas held that they cannot judge falsely or make errors in reasoning. Only in two respects is their intellect in potency, according to Aquinas: with regard to the actual exercise of knowledge, and concerning truths of the supernatural order. With respect to the latter, the demons (but not the good angels) can have mistaken judgments, insofar as they presumptuously judge about things that transcend their

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[5] For Augustine's theory of angelic sin, see Peter King, "Augustine and Anselm on Angelic Sin," in this volume.

[6] The theories of the Arts Masters on the will are irrelevant for the topic of angelic sin, because, as non-theologians, they did not discuss this issue.

[7] See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a2ae.8.1 and 3a.18.4 ad 2.

[8] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a2ae.77.2. (All translations are mine.) See also Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.5.1.1 co., ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 2:144–45; and *De malo* 16.5 co., Editio Leonina (Rome, 1882ff.) 23:305a, lines 258–62.

ability of judgment (for example, that this dead man cannot rise from the dead, or that Christ is not God).[9] But since presumption is itself a sin, it cannot be the basis for the first sin; therefore the cognitive defect that is presupposed by the first sin cannot be due to presumption.

Under these presuppositions, Aquinas cannot explain the corruption of the angelic will by a corruption of reason; in other words, the angels could not sin by desiring evil under the aspect of the good. This is where the Aristotelianism of Aquinas gives way to his Augustinianism. If the angels only had their own practical understanding as a guide, they could not sin. Yet, for Aquinas, they were under a higher rule than the order of reason, namely, the rule of the divine will. They could not ignore this higher rule, but they could fail to actually consider it. And this is how they sinned, in his view: without considering this higher rule, they desired something good under the aspect of the good, namely, supernatural happiness, which consists in seeing God. There was nothing wrong in having this desire; only the manner in which they desired supernatural happiness was blameworthy. They did not desire it in subjection to the divine rule, according to which supernatural happiness was supposed to be had by divine grace rather than through the angels' own effort. For this reason, Aquinas calls it a sin of pride.[10]

To avoid a regress, Aquinas argues that the lack of consideration of the rule of action is not itself sinful. He makes this specification not in the context of angelic sin but in discussing whether good is a cause of evil. According to Aquinas, the non-consideration of the rule becomes sinful only at the moment one actually performs an action for which the rule is relevant. Aquinas exemplifies this with a craftsman who is not required to hold a ruler constantly in hand except when he is actually cutting wood to a specified length.[11] Aquinas's medieval critics who rejected his explanation of angelic sin generally made no mention of this clarification.

In the attempt to shed some further light on the question of why the bad angels failed to consider the divine rule, Aquinas proposes early in his career, in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, that this lack of consideration

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[9] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.1 and 4–5; *De malo* 16.6 co., Editio Leonina 23:309b–310b. See also Harm Goris's chapter in this volume, "Angelic Knowledge in Aquinas and Bonaventure," pp. 173–74.

[10] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.63.1 ad 4; 1a.63.2; *De malo* 16.2 co., ad 1, and ad 4, Editio Leonina 23:288b–290a; 16.3 co., Editio Leonina 23:294a–b.

[11] Aquinas, *De malo* 1.3 co. and ad 13, Editio Leonina 23:15b–16b and 17b; more succinctly in *Summa theologiae* 1a.49.1 ad 3 and 1a2ae.75.1 ad 3.

resulted from an intense focus on their own goodness.[12] Later, he no longer mentions this hypothesis. In fact, if being absorbed in themselves is sinful, then this sin itself must be explained; if not, then it has little explanatory force. The really puzzling question is what made the angels not only fail to heed the rule of action but also proceed to an act while not considering the relevant rule.

The unique challenge that angelic sin poses to Aquinas's account of free decision is that he is committed to two ideas: first, that the will's act depends entirely on the input from the intellect; second, that the angelic intellect is created flawless. The only cognitive shortcoming available to the angelic intellect is lack of consideration. Yet, for Aquinas, the exercise of knowledge is subject to the will. Therefore, lack of consideration is voluntary, at least "indirectly voluntary," that is, insofar as the lapse of attention is not counteracted by the will. In addition, the will is in control of whatever activity is done in a state of inattention to the rule. And yet, because of the infallible nature of the angelic intellect, the sinful act could not have been proposed to the will under the description under which the will acted, that is, as an activity to be done while remaining oblivious to the divine rule. It seems that Aquinas would have had to grant the will a greater autonomy from the intellect to make his theory of angelic sin work.[13]

Later authors tended to place more emphasis on the will in explaining angelic sin. Three explanatory models follow a more voluntarist route: The first model offers a minimalist explanation of angelic sin as the self-corruption of the will, which subsequently corrupts reason (John Pecham and Henry of Ghent). The second model maintains the dependence of the will upon the intellect but grants the will an active role in producing the cognitive deficiency leading to sin (Giles of Rome and Peter Auriol). The third locates the angelic sin clearly on the side of the will while conceiving the will as having two distinct and potentially contrary inclinations, one to personal advantage, the other to morality (Duns Scotus). But

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[12] Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.110 n. 2851, ed. Marietti, 3:167b.

[13] For a more in-depth discussion of Aquinas's account, see my "Aquinas and Intellectual Determinism: The Test Case of Angelic Sin," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 89 (2007): 122–56. Jacques Maritain proposes a distinctly voluntarist interpretation of Aquinas's account of angelic sin; see his "Le péché de l'Ange," *Revue Thomiste* 56 (1956): 197–239, translated by William L. Rossner as *The Sin of the Angel: An Essay on a Re-interpretation of Some Thomistic Positions* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1959). See also the incisive study by Jacques de Blic, "Saint Thomas et l'intellectualisme moral: à propos de la peccabilité de l'ange," *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 1 (1944): 241–80.

voluntarist explanations were not the only trend after Aquinas. Godfrey of Fontaines, who has a decidedly intellectualist account of free decision, was not willing to make any concessions to accommodate the difficult case of angelic sin. What all of these explanations have in common is the attempt to account for angelic sin by clarifying the relationship between the angelic intellect and will. Another model, by Richard of Middleton, limits itself to a metaphysical explanation of why the angelic will, which was created good, could cause a deficient act. Since Richard's discussion sidesteps the problem of the relationship of intellect and will, it shall not be discussed here.[14]

1.2. *John Pecham and Henry of Ghent: The Will Corrupts the Intellect*

In 1270, that is, before Aquinas disputed question 16 of *De malo* on the demons, but after he wrote his other works that contain discussions of angelic sin, John Pecham proposed his view in opposition to Aquinas's early theory from the *Summa contra Gentiles*, which had stated that the bad angels' intense focus on themselves made them fail to consider what they ought to have considered. He agrees with Aquinas that, prior to sin, the angelic intellect was not subject to error. His argument is not of a philosophical nature like Aquinas's, but he uses a widely accepted theological axiom, namely, that God's punishment is not experienced prior to the occurrence of sin, and he concludes from it that fallibility—a punishment—enters the world only as a consequence of fault. From now on, this axiom provides the standard argument for the infallibility of the angelic intellect.[15]

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[14] Richard of Middleton expands on the Augustinian explanation of angelic sin; see Richard de Mediavilla, *Questions disputées*, vol. 4: *Questions 23–31, Les démons*, ed. and trans. Alain Boureau (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011), 7–50.

[15] John Pecham, *Quodl.* 1.4 n. 3, ed. Girard J. Etzkorn, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 25 (Grottaferrata: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1989), 11. Pecham mistakenly refers to *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* q. 9. Instead, as the editor points out, his quotation is from *De libero arbitrio* 3.18.52 n. 179, CCL 29:306. For the dating of *Quodl.* 1, see Girard J. Etzkorn, "Franciscan *Quodlibeta* 1270–1285: John Pecham, Matthew of Aquasparta, and Roger Marston," in *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1: *The Thirteenth Century*, ed. Christopher Schabel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 135–49, at 136; for the dating of Aquinas's works, see Gilles Emery, "Bref catalogue des œuvres de saint Thomas," in *Initiation à saint Thomas d'Aquin*, by Jean-Pierre Torrell (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires de Fribourg; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993), 483–525.

While the axiom that there is no punishment prior to fault was widely used before Pecham, he may have been the first to apply it specifically to the infallibility of angels prior to sin. In fact, after Pecham's explanation of how this axiom applies to angelic infallibility, later authors no longer feel the need to argue for it. For previous thinkers such as Albert the Great, Bonaventure, and Aquinas, this axiom serves to exclude the possibility that the

All attempts to trace the disorder of the will to the intellect fail, according to Pecham, because, prior to sin, everything in the intellectual creature was well ordered. So, the bad angels could not have focused immoderately on their own goodness. In any event, if they had, then according to Pecham their first sin would have consisted in a sin of omission. (Pecham does not specify whether this sin of omission would be the failure to moderate the self-focus or whether it would consist in the failure to heed what ought to have been considered.)[16]

For Pecham, knowledge is not the total cause of the movement of free decision, but only disposes to its movement. So, it is not the sin of the will that presupposes a defective intellect but the reverse: an unrestrained will blinds the intellect. Seeing his own beauty, the angel delighted in it at first without sin, but later immoderately. In this immoderate delight, Pecham seems to think, the will became sinful for the first time. But worse evils followed: the immoderate self-delight caused the blinding of the intellect, which then brought about a disordered desire and, finally, the wicked choice by which he claimed divinity for himself. According to Pecham, the generally accepted tenet that malice implies error, expressed in the Aristotelian adage that "every evildoer is ignorant" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 3.1.1110b29–30), means that a flawed will moves the intellect into error, not vice versa.[17]

Pecham is here laying the seeds for a theory that Henry of Ghent will champion and elaborate throughout his career as a Master at Paris. In his first quodlibetal disputation of 1276, Henry was asked "whether the disorder of the will is caused by an error of reason or vice versa."[18] He developed the answer to this question partly in the response to the question that precedes it, where he was asked "whether when presented by reason with something good and something better, the will can choose

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bad angels had foreknowledge of their fall, for then they would have experienced distress (*tristitia*) prior to their fall, and thus they would have been punished prior to their fault; see Albert the Great, *In Sent.* 2.4.F.3, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris: Vivès, 1894), 27:108b; Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 2.4.2.2 fund. 1, *Opera omnia* 2:137a; and Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2.4.1.2 s.c. 2, ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 2:135.

[16] John Pecham, *Quodl.* 1.4 n. 5, p. 12.

[17] John Pecham, *Quodl.* 1.4 nn. 6–7, pp. 12–13.

[18] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 1.17, ed. Raymond Macken, *Opera omnia* (Leiden: Brill; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979ff.) 5:115–50; the question is formulated in the introduction to *Quodl.* 1.15, *Opera omnia* 5:91. For the dating, see Pasquale Porro, "Doing Theology (and Philosophy) in the First Person: Henry of Ghent's *Quodlibeta*," in *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1: *The Thirteenth Century*, 171–231, at 174–77.

the smaller good."[19] For Henry, the disorder of the will is caused entirely by the will itself. There is no positive cause for sin, only a voluntary defect, the cause of which is nothing but the will itself.[20] Henry proposes the following consideration to exclude the idea that sinful willing can be traced to defective reason:

> Suppose there is an error in reason that does not originate from a vice of the will (that is, of a will that either desires badly or that does not appropriately direct the consideration of reason so as to avoid erring). If the will conforms to that error necessarily, then it does not sin in acting badly. Therefore, either whatever error there is in reason has its origin in a vice of the will, or there is no sin at all. Consequently, if the will never sins except because of a preceding error in reason, then the will never sins at all, but is rather entirely unable to sin.[21]

This consideration presupposes that reason does not control its own act apart from an intervention of the will.[22] So, unless an error of reason is caused by the will, it occurs by natural necessity. If that error then entails a corresponding act of the will, that act is going to occur by natural necessity as well. But this act would not be sinful, because sin does not occur by natural necessity. So, if the reality of sin is to be upheld, it cannot be traced to a defective intellect, only to a defective will.

According to Henry, once the will is corrupt, it can corrupt reason, either by not moving reason to find out what is required by the moral law and what is necessary for salvation, or by not restraining reason from a hasty judgment that leads to error.[23]

The case of angelic sin and of the first man's sin confirms this priority of volitional over cognitive deficiencies. Henry argues along lines similar to Pecham: before the first sin, the angelic and human intellect could not be ignorant or erroneous, because cognitive deficiencies are only subsequent to fault, as its punishment. According to Henry, Adam (and presumably the bad angels) acted directly contrary to a determinate judgment of right reason. This proves, for Henry, that it belongs to the nature of the will—then just as much as now—to be able to act contrary to the judgment of reason. In conclusion, "every disorder in reason by way of error proceeds

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[19] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 1.16, *Opera omnia* 5:94–115; again, for the formulation of the question see *Quodl.* 1.15, *Opera omnia* 5:91.

[20] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 1.16, *Opera omnia* 5:111, lines 71–75.

[21] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 1.16, *Opera omnia* 5:112, lines 89–96.

[22] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 1.16, *Opera omnia* 5:107, line 94 – 5:108, line 6.

[23] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 1.17, *Opera omnia* 5:118, lines 69–80.

causally from a disorder of the will by means of an improper desire, not vice versa."[24] Henry specifies, however, that although the will's becoming depraved is causally prior to the intellect's falling into error, they occur simultaneously.[25]

In Quodlibet VIII of 1284, Henry explains in detail why the sin of Lucifer did not proceed from error but, rather, entailed it. Lucifer's sin of pride did not consist in a misapprehension of his rank. He did not think he had his own excellence from himself, nor that he had it because of his own merits, nor did he boast about possessing qualities that he did not in fact have. He simply prided himself unduly in his unique status. But, since he was indeed superior, his sin of pride did not involve a misjudgment, merely a disordered will. Only after his self-exaltation was his intellect obscured. He desired to preside over the other angels, but since his will did not order his intellect to think carefully about it, he did not take into consideration that it did not befit him to have this presidency by purely natural means. He was supposed to suspend his judgment about what he was striving for until he received a divine precept concerning the manner in which he was to obtain his presidency; and, in fact, he would have obtained it if he had humbly waited to receive it as a gift.[26] The similarities with Descartes's voluntarist explanation of error are striking: the will of Lucifer failed to make his intellect refrain from judging when absolute clarity was not yet obtained.

Like Aquinas, Henry holds that Lucifer's sin consisted not in desiring something bad but in desiring something good in a manner that was not regulated by a divine rule. But, unlike Aquinas, he thinks that the corruption of the will did not presuppose but, rather, entailed, the darkening of the intellect. The reversal of the relationship between intellect and will is typical for voluntarist authors who write after Aquinas. One of the main problems with this view is that it cannot say *why* someone with a perfect

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[24] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 1.16, *Opera omnia* 5:116, lines 29–35; *Quodl.* 1.17, *Opera omnia* 5:128, line 92 – 5:129, line 15.

[25] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 1.17, *Opera omnia* 5:147, lines 18–19. Henry will further develop this theory of a simultaneous corruption of reason and will, which, however, originates causally in the will, in Quodlibet X. There he famously uses this theory to reconcile the idea sanctioned by the censure of articles 129 and 130 of the 1277 condemnations, that the will does not necessarily follow reason, with the so-called *propositio magistralis*, a statement by Giles of Rome that the Masters of theology accepted in 1285, according to which there is no evil in the will without error in reason. In fact, according to Henry's explanation, the will becomes corrupt by itself, but then immediately reason also gets corrupted. See *Quodl.* 10.9, 10.10, and 10.13, *Opera omnia* 14:243–48, 258–71, and 287–89.

[26] *Quodl.* 8.10, ed. Badius (Paris, 1518), 322vR–323rR.

natural constitution would make a corrupt choice, for only a flawed consideration could suggest the reason for making a corrupt choice. If the evil choice results from a sheer determination of the will, apart from reason, then it seems to be an unintelligible event that would ultimately be a matter of bad luck. Lucifer just happened to have a bad day, so to speak.

This view also raises an important metaphysical problem. Understanding the will's freedom in terms of its autonomy with regard to intellect (or reason) implies that the will is a self-mover, for, if the will's movement does not result from the intellect (or reason) moving it, then it must be generated by the will itself. Henry explicitly draws out this implication in his ninth Quodlibet.[27] From this point on, discussions of freedom of the will will be linked with the highly controversial theory of the will's self-movement.

1.3. *Giles of Rome and Peter Auriol: Indirect Self-Specification of the Will*

If the angelic intellect became corrupted by itself, and if the resulting error caused the will to sin, then the sin was not in the control of the agent but, rather, happened by natural necessity. This was a key consideration for Henry's rejection of intellectualist accounts of angelic sin. But his own theory does not fare much better. If the angelic will became corrupted by itself, apart from a misdirection of reason, then the sin seems to result from bad luck, for then the act was not done for a specific reason. A theory that combines the roles of will and intellect appears to have a better chance of success. One such possibility consists in claiming that the corruption of the intellect, which led to the first sinful act, was itself triggered by the will. This hypothesis combines intellectualist and voluntarist elements; it was first systematically pursued by Giles of Rome and later refined by Peter Auriol.

In his earliest statement on the issue, in the *Reportatio* of his lectures on Book II of the *Sentences* (dated 1270 or 1271), Giles follows Aquinas in the main lines of his argument, but differs from him in a significant way. According to Giles, the sin of the angels consisted in desiring happiness outside the appropriate order in which it was to be desired, namely, as

[27] *Quodl.* 9.5, ed. Macken, *Opera omnia* 13:130, line 3 – 13:131, line 9. In later Quodlibets (10.9, 11.6, 12.26, 13.11), Henry will address objections to this theory. For discussion, see Roland J. Teske, "Henry of Ghent's Rejection of the Principle: 'omne quod movetur ab alio movetur,' " in *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of His Death (1293)*, ed. Willy Vanhamel (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 279–308.

a divine gift rather than as the fruit of one's natural capacities. As to the relation of intellect and will, Giles adopts Pecham's language: the disordered desire of the bad angels does not presuppose an intellectual disorder (*inordinatio intellectus*), that is, a mistaken judgment that beatitude was attainable by purely natural means. (Giles excludes fallibility for the reason given by Pecham: there is no punishment prior to fault.) Nor did the disordered desire happen in *full* awareness of the order in which beatitude was to be had. Unlike Aquinas, Giles explicitly calls the inattention to the appropriate order an omission, and he attributes it directly to the will: the angelic will wanted to omit thinking that beatitude could not be had by natural means.[28] Whereas Aquinas did not identify how this inattention to the divine rule occurred, Giles explicitly states that the angelic will influenced the intellect's activity so as to make the first sin possible.

Later, in the third Quodlibet (of 1287 or 1288), Giles systematically developed the theory of indirect self-specification of the will. His considerations here do not specifically concern angelic sin but, rather, concern free decision in general. According to Giles, that which is understood as good from every point of view (*quod apprehenditur sub omni ratione boni*) is the end of the will and moves the will necessarily. In contrast, things that are conducive to attaining one's end (*quae sunt ad finem*) are not understood as good from every point of view; therefore, they cannot move the will in a determinate way. The will has to determine itself so as to be moved by any of these. For Giles, this happens by the detour of the will's influence on the intellect. The will determines itself as to whether it wants the intellect to dwell on one consideration rather than another, such as whether it wants the intellect to dwell on the consideration of the pleasure or of the inordinateness of fornicating. Whatever is then under the intellect's consideration moves the will to its act. Giles holds that the will cannot move itself from potency to act and that it needs the apprehended good to actualize it in its willing. But once actualized, it can determine itself to persist or not in its willing.[29] He does not explain, however, why self-determination is possible when self-actualization is not.

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[28] Giles of Rome, *Reportatio* 2.29, ed. Concetta Luna, *Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia* III.2 (Florence: Sismel—Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003), 249–50. For the dating of Giles's works, see Francesco del Punta and Cecilia Trifogli, "Giles of Rome (c. 1243/7–1316)," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 72b–78a, at 76a–77b.

[29] Giles of Rome, *Quodl.* 3.15 (Leuven, 1546), 177b–180a; see also *Quodl.* 4.21, pp. 258b–259b. For detailed discussion, see Peter S. Eardley, "Thomas Aquinas and Giles of

In Giles's definitive account of angelic sin, in his monumental *Ordinatio* of his Commentary on the *Sentences* (Book II was begun after 1290 and not completed before 1309), the earlier explanation is refined, but not substantially altered. Because Lucifer delighted in his extraordinary beauty, he falsely thought he could attain beatitude by his own natural resources. (Giles now holds that in matters that exceed the natural order, the angels were fallible.) This mistake was caused by a voluntary omission, for he should have recognized that he should not judge about things exceeding his competence and should have awaited divine instruction.[30] Giles specifies that Lucifer was aware—or at least could and should have been aware—that it was sinful to act without fully knowing how God wanted him to act, but he did not pay attention, because he thought that God was going to be forbearing.[31] As in Aquinas's theory, what is sinful is the desire for beatitude outside of the divine order. But this sin was made possible by the voluntary omission to give heed to the divine order.

By explicitly attributing to the will the guidance of the intellect's attention, Giles explains more clearly than Aquinas how the sinning angels' lack of attention to the divine ordinance came about. Yet, his solution creates a new problem: if the lack of attention was directly willed, this seems to be a sin of omission, and then it is this sin that requires explanation. If that sin is again thought to presuppose some lack of attention, we have an infinite regress.

Peter Auriol systematically develops Giles's theory of the self-specification of the will's act in his lectures on the *Sentences* (delivered 1316–1318). He uses this theory to explain the sin of the angels, rejecting the idea held by Aquinas that angelic sin was made possible by lack of consideration of the divine rule of action.[32] He argues that the angelic will freely

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Rome on the Will," *Review of Metaphysics* 56 (2003): 835–62, esp. 847–58. I owe to Eardley the term "indirect self-specification"; cf. p. 858.

[30] Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2.5.1.1, vol. 2, pars 1 (Venice, 1581; repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968), 280bC–281bB.

[31] Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2.6.1.2, p. 298aC–bC. Regarding the presumption of God's mercy, Giles adopts the theory of Anselm of Canterbury, *De casu diaboli* 23, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1938–1961), 1:270–71.

[32] For a more detailed account, see my "Peter Auriol on Practical Judgment and Angelic Sin," in *Contingency and Freedom: Franciscan Theories in the Early Fourteenth Century*, ed. Guido Alliney (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming). The target of Auriol's critique is Aquinas, not Giles; see Peter Auriol, *Reportatio* 2.4.3, ed. Tobias Hoffmann (appendix of "Peter Auriol on Practical Judgment and Angelic Sin"), pp. 65–69 [78aC–79aA]. For the dating, see Peter Auriol, *Scriptum super Primum Sententiarum*, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1952), 1:XV.

determined the practical judgment that moved it to its sin. For Auriol, not every kind of practical judgment necessarily engages the will's volition. He distinguishes between an "indicative" and an "imperative" practical judgment (*iudicium enunciativum, iudicium imperativum*). The indicative judgment has the form of an indicative statement: "this is to be done." It is had without the involvement of the will, merely from the consideration of some good in conjunction with some reasoning from the first practical principles. Conversely, the imperative judgment consists in a command: "do now what accords with practical reason." The will can diverge from an indicative judgment, but it necessarily follows an imperative judgment.[33]

The imperative judgment is obtained when the will freely determines an indicative judgment to become imperative. So, when there are two contrary indicative judgments, such as, "It is bad to do this, because it is against right reason" vs. "It is good to do this, because it is pleasurable," the will determines which one becomes imperative, that is, effective.[34] Auriol distinguishes carefully between two activities of the will: determination and volition. The former is not in turn guided by any practical judgment, whereas the latter is had precisely as the volitional response to an imperative judgment. Thus, the will specifies its own act by its ability to endorse or not to endorse an indicative judgment. An endorsed indicative judgment is an imperative judgment, which entails a corresponding act of the will. The will thus moves itself *per accidens*, by determining the judgment that moves the will.[35]

Since determinations are not yet full-blown volitions, but merely the endorsements of a practical judgment or the lack thereof, they are not themselves sinful or upright. Only the volition that results from an imperative judgment can be sinful. In the case of angelic sin, there was no error in the indicative judgment, but the imperative judgment became

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[33] *Reportatio* 2.4.3, pp. 69–71 [79aA–aE]. The distinction between a practical judgment in the indicative mode and one in the imperative mode is found already in Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a2ae.17.1 co., but Aquinas does not develop the distinction.

[34] Cf. Peter Auriol, *Reportatio* 2.4.2, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Soppr. A.III.120, fol. 29va: "Unde accipitur primo maior aliqua, puta malum est fornicari, quia bonum rationis est eligendum. Sed hoc est extimatio quaedam enunciativa, et in universali, et non imperativa. Ideo ad hanc nondum sequitur electio, sed postmodum incontinens occurrente passione, licet habeat universalem, accipit tamen oppositam extimationem in particulari, puta modo est fornicandum cum ista, quia omne delectabile est eligendum. Et tunc voluntas determinat primo talem extimationem et facit eam esse imperativam, quam statim sequitur electio conformis in voluntate."

[35] *Reportatio* 2.4.3, pp. 71–74 [79bA–80aC]. For the *per accidens* self-movement of the will, see *Reportatio* 2.25.1 (Rome, 1605), 2:262–65.

erroneous because of an inadequate (but not sinful) determination of the will.[36] For example, an evil angel could judge "It is very bad to hate God" by an indicative judgment, but after a determination of the will, the evil angel could command hatred of God by an imperative judgment.[37] And once this imperative judgment is formed, the will wills accordingly and thus sins.

With this theory, Auriol wants to uphold two seemingly contrary axioms. The first is that the will is free to act against a practical judgment, an idea that was enforced by Bishop Stephen Tempier's 1277 condemnation of the contrary view.[38] The second is the Aristotelian adage that every evildoer is ignorant. Auriol gives to both only a qualified endorsement: an individual is free to act against the indicative, but not against the imperative, practical judgment; when doing evil, one is ignorant in the sense that the imperative judgment is corrupt, although the indicative judgment may well be intact.[39] Philosophically speaking, Auriol's theory of the two practical judgments is an attempt to reconcile the intentionality of the angelic choice (the sin was chosen for a reason) with its contingency (under perfect cognitive and volitional preconditions, it was possible to either sin or not sin; indeed, some angels sinned while others did not).

Peter Auriol's account, which is more refined and systematic than Giles's, brings out more clearly than Giles what is dissatisfying in both explanations of the will's role in directing angelic practical knowledge. Auriol thinks the sinful act happened only in the volition that followed the command of the imperative judgment, and yet the corruption of that judgment had already taken place when the will's determination endorsed a bad practical judgment. It is not clear what this non-volitional "determination" is. If the determination itself is guided by a practical judgment, there is a regress; if not, it is done without a reason. Whereas Auriol seems to be able to safeguard the intentional, that is, reason-directed character of the will's *volitions*, he fails to account for the intentional nature of the will's *determination* of practical judgments. Yet, this determination is the decisive factor that leads either to an upright imperative judgment and thus to a good act, or to a corrupt imperative judgment and to a bad act.

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[36] *Reportatio* 2.4.3, pp. 74–75 [80aC–80bC].

[37] *Reportatio* 2.7.2 (Rome, 1605), 2:91bA.

[38] The condemned statement is article 129. See David Piché, *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277: texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire* (Paris: Vrin, 1999), 118: "Quod uoluntas, manente passione et scientia particulari in actu, non potest agere contra eam."

[39] For Auriol's intention to be in agreement with this article, see *Reportatio* 2.4.3, pp. 70–71 [79aD]; for his intention to uphold the Aristotelian adage, see ibid., p. 69 [79aA].

This theory is problematic with respect not only to the special case of angelic sin but also to Auriol's account of free decision as a whole.[40]

1.4. *Godfrey of Fontaines: An Intellectualist Account of Angelic Sin*

Giles of Rome, and later Peter Auriol, emphasized both the will's dependence on the intellect's practical judgment and the self-movement of the will. Thus, their explanations of free decision in general and of angelic sin in particular combined intellectualist and voluntarist elements. This combination did not necessarily strengthen their theory; rather, it made them vulnerable to critique from both the intellectualist and the voluntarist camps, for opposite reasons. In the remaining two sections of this first part, I will consider two authors who write after Giles's early- and mid-career works and before Auriol lectured on the *Sentences*: Godfrey of Fontaines, a strict intellectualist; and Duns Scotus, a solid voluntarist.

In the works of Godfrey that have come down to us, there are no protracted treatments of angelic sin. He mentions the issue only briefly when treating the thorny problem of freedom and self-movement of the will in his sixth Quodlibet of 1289.[41] Arguing against proponents of self-movement, Godfrey contends that this hypothesis is metaphysically impossible. According to Godfrey, self-movement implies that two contradictory states of affairs would be the case simultaneously and in the same respect, namely, that the same thing, considered under the same respect, is both in potency and in act.[42] For Godfrey, it is not the will that moves itself; rather, it is the known object that moves the will by efficient causality.[43] In his explanation of angelic sin, he adopts a fundamentally Thomistic framework, with a significant twist:

> I will briefly explain this matter, and I say that their fall does not prove that the same subject moves itself, because the devil sinned only by his spontaneous will, desiring something in a manner in which he was not supposed to desire it. Under the presupposition of the defectibility of the will and

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[40] See, in particular, *Reportatio* 2.25.2 (Rome, 1605), 2:268aC–bB, where Auriol has difficulties addressing the objection that a determination by the will implies a will-act, which in turn implies that the relation between determination and volition is circular.

[41] For the dating of Godfrey's *Quodlibeta*, see John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1981), xxiii–xxviii.

[42] Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* 6.7, Philosophes Belges 3:149. For detailed discussion, see John F. Wippel, "Godfrey of Fontaines and the Act-Potency Axiom," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 11 (1973): 299–317.

[43] Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* 6.7, Philosophes Belges 3:158–64.

> the non-consideration and some sort of negligence by reason, the known object caused in him the act of willing. By this act [of willing] he sinned, because he desired this object in a manner in which he was not supposed to, not because of an error or ignorance that would be temporally antecedent but from a simple lack of knowledge, because of a defect of considering the manner that he was supposed to consider, and upon this lack of knowledge or of consideration there followed an error or ignorance. This error or ignorance was temporally simultaneous with the consent, but according to nature it was prior.[44]

Unlike Aquinas, Godfrey thus traces the origin of angelic sin to the known object. Against Henry, who in order to allow for the self-movement of the will exempted spiritual substances from the Aristotelian principle that "everything that is moved, is moved by another," Godfrey affirms that this principle applies also to angels and to the soul. He urges us not to give up a metaphysical principle in order to solve the problem of freedom. Godfrey concludes by saying that the object that is understood moves both the act of understanding and the act of willing.[45]

It is puzzling how Godfrey might think that under this premise the first sinful act was in the control of the devil. In the passage above, he mentions that the angelic mind was negligent. As we have seen before, the hypothesis of negligence does not explain much at all. If negligence is sinful, it cannot be the basis for the first sin. Furthermore, if the negligence was self-caused, then this theory implies self-movement after all. Godfrey seems to give up when presented with the problem of angelic sin; in fact, he prefaces his brief discussion with the disclaimer that we can speak of it not from the authority of natural reason but merely from the authority of Scripture, in which we do not find any hints about the mode in which the angels sinned.[46]

1.5. *Duns Scotus: Abandonment of Eudaimonism and Synchronic Contingency*

Whereas Godfrey marginalized the issue of angelic sin in his discussion of free decision, Duns Scotus gave it a central importance in his action

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[44] Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* 6.7, Philosophes Belges 3:168.

[45] Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* 6.7, Philosophes Belges 3:170. For the Aristotelian principle that everything that is moved is moved by another, see *Physica* 7.1.241b34 and 8.4.256a2–3, ed. Fernand Bossier and Jozef Brams (Leiden: Brill, 1990), Aristoteles Latinus 7/1:256 and 296; for Henry of Ghent's view that this does not apply to spiritual realities, see his *Quodl.* 10.9, *Opera omnia* 14:233, line 54 – 14:234, line 87.

[46] Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* 6.7, Philosophes Belges 3:168.

theory. In fact, for Godfrey, angelic sin is a bothersome case that jeopardizes his strictly intellectualist account of free decision. For Scotus, it is a welcome confirmation that the origin of free decision lies in the will itself.[47] In comparison with earlier voluntarists, Scotus's contribution lies in the clarification of the sense in which the angelic will had alternative possibilities. He does so at the level of moral psychology and of modal theory. Concerning moral psychology, he has recourse to Anselm of Canterbury's theory of two distinct and potentially conflicting "affections."[48] Concerning modal theory, he adopts the theory that contemporary interpreters label "synchronic contingency," developed a little earlier by Peter of John Olivi. In what follows, I will expound Scotus's mature thought as found in the *Ordinatio* (which he constantly revised, until his premature death in 1308) and the *Reportatio Parisiensis* (1302–1304).

By means of the two-affections theory, Scotus avoids two implications that voluntarist authors deemed problematic in intellectualist explanations of angelic sin. If the evil choice of the bad angels were to be traced to the intellect, this would presuppose a cognitive deficiency prior to the first sin, which he thinks is impossible. Furthermore, it would jeopardize alternative possibilities. Scotus says this succinctly:

> Since the intellect of the angels was correct in its cognition (for there is no punishment prior to fault), it moves the will to desire something uprightly.

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47 Although Scotus does not mention Godfrey in his discussions of angelic sin, he interestingly brings up the issue of angelic sin in his rejection of Godfrey's peculiar theories of free decision and of intellectual knowledge, both of which Godfrey constructs upon his strict denial of self-movement. Scotus argues that Godfrey's account of free decision and of knowledge would have the absurd implication that the angels could not have sinned without God himself causing the act by which they sinned; see *Lectura* 2.25 n. 40, Editio Vaticana (Vatican City: Typis Vaticanis, 1950ff.) 19:241; *Ordinatio* 1.3.3.2 nn. 430–32, Editio Vaticana 3:262–63. This type of argument is witness to the fact that, for Scotus, any robust theory of intellect and will has to make room for the possibility of angelic sin.

For more wide-ranging accounts of the relevance of angelology for Scotus's action theory than can be given here, see Christophe Cervellon, "L'affection de justice chez Duns Scot: justice et luxure dans le péché de l'ange," in *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302–2002: Actes du colloque de Paris, 2–4 septembre 2002*, ed. Olivier Boulnois et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 425–68; Tobias Hoffmann, "Duns Scotus's Action Theory in the Context of His Angelology," in *Johannes Duns Scotus 1308–2008: Die philosophischen Perspektiven seines Werkes / Investigations into His Philosophy. Proceedings of "The Quadruple Congress" on John Duns Scotus*, part 3, ed. Ludger Honnefelder et al. (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications; Münster: Aschendorff, 2010), 403–20.

48 For Anselm's theory of the affections in his explanation of angelic sin, see Marilyn McCord Adams, "St. Anselm on Evil: *De casu diaboli*," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 3 (1992): 423–51; and Peter King, "Augustine and Anselm on Angelic Sin," in this volume.

> It was not possible for the intellect to move [the will] differently, because it moves in a natural mode,[49] and therefore it can only move according to the mode of knowledge it has; therefore it moves the will to will uprightly. Therefore the will could never sin![50]

Scotus does not trace angelic sin to the intellect but, rather, considers it to be rooted in the will alone. Two disordered volitions succeeded each other in the sinning angel, according to Scotus: first, a love of friendship by which he had a disordered self-love ("love of friendship" can indeed be self-directed); second, a love of concupiscence by which he improperly desired happiness for himself.[51] Scotus elaborates especially on the inappropriate love of concupiscence, and it is here above all that he employs the two-affections theory.[52] For Scotus, the two "affections" are two predispositions of the will; the *affectio commodi* is the inclination toward what is understood to be most conducive to one's own happiness, while the *affectio iustitiae* is the will's ability to affirm a good apart from its order to personal happiness. Scotus identifies the *affectio commodi* with the will under the formality of intellectual appetite (*appetitus intellectivus*) and the *affectio iustitiae* with the will under the formality of freedom (understood as capacity of alternative possibilities).[53] The will is not bound actually to

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[49] For Scotus, it is characteristic of the intellect to function "according to a natural mode" (*per modum naturae*), which in his terminology means precisely that its activity and effectiveness is not in its control but fully determined by the circumstances in which it is active. Thus, the intellect cannot decide whether or not to understand something or to assent to a proposition; rather, the intellect's understanding or assent depends on the object or proposition it considers. See *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* 9.15 n. 36, ed. Girard J. Etzkorn et al., *Opera Philosophica* 4 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1997), 684–85; and Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 n. 58, Editio Vaticana 8:50.

[50] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 n. 20, Editio Vaticana 8:83.

[51] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 nn. 34–43, Editio Vaticana 8:39–45. Since Scotus holds that the sinful love of concupiscence of the angels consisted in an immoderate desire for happiness, he argues that it is, formally, a sin not of pride but of lust; see *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 n. 71, Editio Vaticana 8:62. Scotus seems to depend on Richard of Middleton, *Quaestiones disputatae* 26.2, 4:136–38.

[52] In the *Ordinatio*, Scotus does not mention the two affections of the will concerning the disordered act of self-directed love of friendship, only concerning the disordered love of concupiscence. In his Paris lectures, he briefly evokes this distinction also concerning the disordered love of friendship; see *Reportatio* 2A.6.2, Oxford, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 144v: "Nam actus deordinatus non sequitur regulam iustitiae . . . Ergo primus actus inordinatus in affectione commodi est velle, et non amore concupiscentiae, sed amore amicitiae, cum illud cui volo commodum sit finis illius quod volo et prius in ordine affectionis commodi cui volo commodum quam illud commodum."

[53] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 nn. 49–50, Editio Vaticana 8:48–50; *Ordinatio* 3.26 n. 110, Editio Vaticana 10:35. For Scotus's peculiar adaptation of Anselm's theory, see Peter King,

desire what the *affectio commodi* inclines it to, but thanks to the *affectio iustitiae*, it can and is supposed to freely adjust its desire according to the requirement of morality. Failing to do so does not presuppose a misconception of the good, merely a preference for one good (*commodum*, i.e., personal advantage) rather than another (*iustum*, i.e., morality). For Scotus, there is not necessarily a "contrastive reason" for the will's choice, that is, there is no reason why the will chooses A *rather than* B. But if it chooses A, then it has a rational motivation that can be categorized either under personal advantage or under morality.

What ultimately makes the will act on one reason rather than another, that is, why it is that the will wills what it wills, cannot be explained.[54] The two-affections theory provides Scotus with an account for why, even under perfect knowledge conditions, an agent does not necessarily act for contrastive reasons. This allows Scotus to guarantee that the choice has alternative possibilities. If the will had only one fundamental orientation, namely, toward self-perfection, then an agent with perfect knowledge would always choose the action that maximizes the personal advantage. Such an agent could not do otherwise and could not be blamed for his or her action. Instead, thanks to the two affections, it is open to the agent to choose an act either under the formality of personal advantage or of morality.[55]

This, then, is how the bad angels sinned, according to Scotus: they inordinately desired beatitude by failing to moderate this desire according to the rule of justice, a rule that is determined by a "higher will," the will of God.[56] Scotus imagines several ways in which the desire for happiness might have been inordinate. One way echoes Aquinas's theory of desiring happiness to be obtained by purely natural means rather than by grace.[57] Scotus's other hypotheses are that the bad angels wanted to have happiness earlier than was fitting, or—what seems to be Scotus's preferred

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"Scotus's Rejection of Anselm: The Two-Wills Theory," in *Johannes Duns Scotus 1308–2008: Die philosophischen Perspektiven seines Werkes / Investigations into His Philosophy*, 359–78.

[54] Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* 9.15 n. 29, *Opera Philosophica* 4:682.

[55] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 n. 49, Editio Vaticana 8:48–49.

[56] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 n. 40, Editio Vaticana 8:42–43. For the claim that the rule is given by a higher will, see *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 n. 51, n. 57, and n. 60, Editio Vaticana 8:51; 54–55. In *Reportatio* 2A.6.2, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 145r, Scotus identifies this rule with the will of God: "Unde istae duae affectiones commodi et iusti regulantur per regulam superiorem, quae est voluntas divina."

[57] In medieval theology, the word "merit" implies grace, for it is understood that apart from grace, no moral action is "meritorious," that is, valuable in view of attaining supernatural happiness.

assumption—that they desired happiness more as a good for themselves than as a good in and of itself, that is, that they wanted it more for themselves than for God.[58]

According to this theory, no cognitive defect was presupposed in the angelic intellect, for the bad angels judged rightly that happiness was supremely beneficial. Furthermore, alternative possibilities are safeguarded, because in light of the judgment about what is most profitable in view of happiness, the angelic will was free to act on this judgment or according to a different criterion, namely, the rule of justice.

What Scotus's adaptation of Anselm's two-affection theory adds to the thirteenth-century debate about angelic sin is an explicit reference to the relationship between happiness and morality. For Scotus—as, previously, for Anselm—the maximal pursuit of authentic happiness does not imply the maximal pursuit of morality, and vice versa. This means abandoning eudaimonism, as appears most clearly by a comparison with an eudaimonistic theory like Aquinas's, according to whom the will only has the orientation toward happiness. Thus, for Aquinas, the will desires whatever it desires for the sake of happiness, its ultimate end.[59] Conversely, according to Scotus, "every elicited act of the will is elicited either according to the affection for justice or for what is advantageous."[60] The will has two fundamental predispositions, not one. The will is not bound to desire all it desires as conducive to happiness. It does not even desire happiness of necessity.[61] For Aquinas, the only way to pursue happiness in an unsuitable way is to misidentify what truly leads to happiness, while for Scotus, one can go wrong even in pursuing happiness too much for oneself. In the case of the angels, Aquinas holds that the angels can only go wrong in their pursuit of supernatural happiness, whereas for Scotus, the angels can go wrong even in pursuing their natural inclination to happiness.[62]

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[58] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 nn. 52–53 and n. 61, Editio Vaticana 8:51–52 and 56.

[59] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.82.2; 1a2ae.1.5–6. For an excellent account of why Aquinas's eudaimonism does not restrict the scope of human desire to egotistic self-love, see David M. Gallagher, "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1–47.

[60] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 n. 40, Editio Vaticana 8:43.

[61] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 1.1.2.2 nn. 143–45 and n. 152, Editio Vaticana 1:96–97 and 103–4.

[62] See especially Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.6.2 n. 51, n. 57, and n. 60, Editio Vaticana 8:50–51 and 53–55. For Scotus's abandonment of eudaimonism, see Thomas Williams, "How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 425–45; and Christopher Toner, "Angelic Sin in Aquinas and Scotus and the Genesis of Some Central Objections to Contemporary Virtue Ethics," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 79–125.

It is worth looking briefly at a second perspective from which Scotus clarifies the angelic will's alternative possibilities. It arises in his discussion of the canonical question of whether an angel could have sinned in the very first moment of his existence. Although his answer does not directly address the problem of how angelic sin is possible, it deserves mention because it sheds further light on Scotus's theory of the will and because it had an important influence on later discussions of freedom of indifference until Descartes and beyond.[63]

Scotus mentions a view according to which sin in the first instant of the angel's existence was impossible. Since the angel did not have alternative possibilities in the first instant, he could not sin. Scotus summarizes this view as follows:

> When [an angel] actually sinned, he did not have in this "then" and with respect to this "then" concomitantly with the act the potency for the opposite [act], for then there would have been simultaneously two contradictory [states of affairs].[64]

This view argues along the lines of the theory formulated by Hugh of St. Victor, taken up by Peter Lombard and widely accepted by later authors, that free decision concerns only future contingents, because what is present is already determined.[65]

Against this view, Scotus argues that alternative possibilities must be contemporaneous with the choice, rather than posterior to it:

> This argument is not valid, because . . . a cause does not cause its effect insofar as it precedes it in duration, but only insofar as it precedes it in the order of nature. Hence, if at the moment in which a cause causes its effect, it causes it necessarily (in the divided sense),[66] then the entire contingency of free decision is destroyed.[67]

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[63] See the detailed study by Jacob Schmutz, "Du péché de l'ange à la liberté d'indifférence: les sources angélologiques de l'anthropologie moderne," *Études philosophiques* 61 (2002): 169–98.

[64] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.4, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 140r: "cum actu peccavit, non habuit in tunc et pro tunc potentiam cum actu ad oppositum, quia tunc simul duo contradictoria."

[65] Hugh of St. Victor, *Summa sententiarum* 3.9, PL 176:102; Peter Lombard, *Sent*. 2.25.1 n. 3, 1:461. Hugh and Lombard state a theory similar to Aristotle's view of the necessity of the present; see *De interpretatione* 9.19a22–b4.

[66] The technical expression "in the divided sense" indicates which part of the sentence the modal term qualifies. In Scotus's sentence, the modal term "necessarily" does not indicate the tautological truth that when a cause causes, then it is necessarily the case that it causes. Rather, the word "necessarily" qualifies the mode of causation, namely, as necessary rather than contingent causation.

[67] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.4, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 140r: "Nec ista ratio valet, quia ut dictum distinctione secunda huius libri, quod causa non causat ut prius duratione

The point is that if there is no "synchronic contingency," that is, if there are no alternative possibilities *in the present*, such that at the moment the angelic will chooses A, it is possible for it not to choose A, then there are no alternative possibilities at all. Scotus depends for this insight on Peter of John Olivi, who develops this idea in the same context, namely, of the possibility of angelic sin in the first moment of angelic existence. The idea is that free decision cannot concern future alternative possibilities, because no one acts in the future, but only in the present. Therefore, future alternative possibilities must become present alternative possibilities in order to be the object of choice.[68] The assumption of alternative possibilities in the present is not without major philosophical difficulties. At the very least, it is counter-intuitive, for—as Scotus admits—the present is, as a matter of fact, determined to one outcome, and yet for Scotus the present allows for alternative possibilities.[69]

The principal difficulty that surfaced in the explanations of angelic sin discussed above was to allow for both the intelligibility and the contingent character of an evil act performed under optimal initial cognitive and affective conditions. Voluntarists had fewer difficulties than intellectualists in providing a coherent narrative of what led to sin. Neither intellectualists nor voluntarists were fully able to explain why a perfect creature would commit moral evil.

The question of the irreversibility of the angelic choice, which we will discuss next, poses a new challenge, putting intellectualists at a slight advantage over voluntarists in providing a credible description of what happened.

2. *Permanent Obstinacy in Evil*

According to the medieval narrative, once the good angels had made their upright choice, they entered the beatific vision of God. The irreversibility

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effectum sed ut prius natura et simul duratione. Ergo si in illo instanti in quo causat necessario causat in sensu diviso, destruitur contingentia tota liberi arbitrii." See also his *Ordinatio* 2.4–5.1–2 n. 19, Editio Vaticana 8:8.

[68] Peter of John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum* 42, ed. Bernhard Jansen, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 4 (Quaracchi, Florence: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, 1922), 1:705–6. For detailed discussion of Scotus's account of synchronic contingency and its indebtedness to Olivi, see Stephen D. Dumont, "The Origin of Scotus's Theory of Synchronic Contingency," *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 149–67.

[69] Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* 2A.4, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 140r: "Ita contingens est haec: 'tu sedes in hoc instanti,' sicut fuit heri: 'tu sedebis in hoc instanti'; non tamen ita indeterminata."

of their choice can be explained by means of the relationship between the will and the beatifying object.[70] No analogous reason is available for the irreversible obstinacy of the evil angels. Consequently, the medieval accounts of the demons' permanent obstinacy are more innovative, and the remaining part of this chapter focuses on these.

It is hard enough to explain how perfect intellectual creatures can sin, but the problem of the irreversibility of the angelic choice is even more difficult to account for. While the previous problem highlighted alternative possibilities in the angelic choice, the issue of permanent obstinacy highlights the lack of alternative possibilities subsequent to that choice. I consider here only three of the authors discussed in the first part—Aquinas, Henry, and Scotus—as well as Ockham (who was not examined earlier because he did not discuss the sheer possibility of angelic sin). Aquinas and Henry explain the demons' obstinacy largely within their theories of intellect and will. They hold that the cause of the obstinacy is intrinsic to the bad angels (that is, resulting from the mode of activity of intellect and will). Scotus's theory of a radically free will does not allow him to explain obstinacy by a feature intrinsic to the angels. Therefore, he has recourse to an extrinsic cause, namely, God's refusing to grant the grace of conversion. Ockham builds upon Scotus and radicalizes his account by making God the direct cause of the demons' hatred of God.

2.1. *Thomas Aquinas: Intellectual Determinism*

Prior to Aquinas and in Aquinas's early teaching, the obstinacy of the demons was simply explained by a divine decision to limit the period in which the angels are "wayfarers," that is, the period in which they could merit beatitude. When this period elapsed after their choice, the bad angels became unable to recede from their evil.[71] In Aquinas's mature works, a different explanation is prominent. In the *Summa theologiae*, he explains demonic obstinacy by internal determinism alone, whereas in the *De malo* he combines internal determinism with an external cause of the obstinacy, which consists in God not granting the grace of conversion.[72]

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[70] For a study of human and angelic confirmation in the good according to Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, and Suárez, see Simon Francis Gaine, *Will there Be Free Will in Heaven? Freedom, Impeccability, and Beatitude* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2003).

[71] See, e.g., Albert the Great, *In Sent*. 2.5.F.6, *Opera omnia* 27:120a–b; Bonaventure, *In Sent*. 2.7.1.1.1, 2:175a–176b; Aquinas, *In Sent*. 2.7.1.2 co., ed. Pierre Mandonnet (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929), 2:184–85.

[72] For Aquinas's earliest view, see the previous footnote. In another text that predates the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas has a fairly undeveloped treatment of demonic obstinacy,

The explanation in the *Summa theologiae* is brief. The premise is that "the appetitive power is in everything correspondent (*proportionatur*) to the cognitive power by which it is moved, like the movable to the moving cause."[73] Since the angelic intellect apprehends in a non-discursive manner, its knowledge is unchanging.[74] Just as angelic knowledge does not change, so the will's adhesion to that knowledge does not change. According to Aquinas, in the moment of choice, the will has freedom to choose among alternatives, but once the choice is made, it is fixed:

> When considered before the adhesion, the will can freely adhere to this or to the opposite (in those things, that is, which the will does not will naturally), but once it adheres, it adheres unchangingly.[75]

According to Aquinas's explanation, there is strict intellectual determinism, but *only after* the first choice has been made. He does not explain why the angelic will has the alternative possibilities to sin or not to sin only before the choice, not after, even though the knowledge conditions apparently do not change.[76]

In the *De malo*, Aquinas presents a more complete account. He now considers obstinacy from the perspective of both the internal and external reason for the immutability of the demonic will. The explanation of the internal reason for this immutability is the same as that in the *Summa theologiae*: the knowledge of the angels is fixed, and since the will fully corresponds to the intellect, their will is fixed as well. The only way their knowledge and willing could undergo change would be if they were moved toward something that transcends their nature, that is, toward the supernatural order. But, on the basis of the axiom that "everything that occurs to someone, occurs to him in congruence with the mode of his nature," Aquinas argues that as the angels are fixed with regard to a natural good, so they are fixed with respect to a supernatural good. The external reason for demonic obstinacy is that God does not grant them the grace by which they would withdraw from evil, because it would go counter to God's wisdom to do so after the "state of the wayfarer" (*status viatoris*) is over.[77]

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indicating a threefold reason for it: divine justice, a non-complex appetitive power, and intellectual (rather than discursive) knowledge. See *De veritate* 24.10, Editio Leonina 22:707a–b.

[73] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.64.2.

[74] For the non-discursive nature of angelic knowledge, see Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.58.3; cf. Harm Goris, "Angelic Knowledge in Aquinas and Bonaventure," in this volume, esp. 169–73.

[75] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.64.2.

[76] Cf. Duns Scotus's critique, *Ordinatio* 2.7 n. 20, Editio Vaticana 8:83.

[77] Aquinas, *De malo* 16.5 co., Editio Leonina 23:305b–306a.

In short: "by his absolute power, God could move the will of the demon to the good; but this is not congruent to the nature of the demon."[78]

In light of the account in the *De malo*, an answer can be given to why the angels had alternative possibilities up to the moment of choice but not after that moment. The reason for this is external to them, not internal. They had alternative possibilities only with respect to the supernatural order; once their choice was made, God granted the good angels the grace of confirmation and refused this grace permanently to the bad angels.

What emerges from Aquinas's account is a commitment to post-choice intellectual determinism that supersedes the incompatibilist freedom the angels experienced at the moment of choice. After their choice, the angels continue to experience freedom, but now only in a compatibilist sense. According to Aquinas, the good angels are free because they are in possession of the beatifying good;[79] the bad angels are free because they voluntarily (and yet immutably) persevere in evil.[80] Therefore, Aquinas is a compatibilist concerning the freedom of angels after their choice.

Aquinas's theory of demonic obstinacy is vulnerable from two perspectives. First, not everyone accepted his idea of the non-discursive and thus immutable mode of angelic knowledge.[81] Second, the will's total dependence on the intellect, such that its acts completely correspond to acts of the intellect, was put into question by the majority of thinkers after Aquinas.

2.2. *Henry of Ghent: Volitional Determinism*

Aquinas built his explanation of demonic obstinacy upon the idea that angelic knowledge and willing are immutable. Henry of Ghent pursued a different strategy. He approaches the issue not from the idea of the fixity of the will but, rather, by investigating the attainability of a good. He distinguishes four kinds of goods: the good of nature, of morality, of grace, and of glory. Of these, the first is not an issue, because even after the fall, the demons retain their natural capacities, such as the ability to know the truth or to delight in a natural good.[82] Nor do the goods of grace and

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[78] Aquinas, *De malo* 16.5 ad 13, Editio Leonina 23:306b.

[79] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.62.8 co.

[80] Aquinas, *De malo* 16.5 ad 8, Editio Leonina 23:306b.

[81] See, e.g., Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 n. 22, Editio Vaticana 8:84–85.

[82] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 8.11, ed. Badius, 323rV. Henry does not seem to have been the first to set up the problem of obstinacy in terms of the unattainability of certain degrees of goodness. Peter of Falco had already used this approach in his disputed questions; see q. 23,

of glory require elaboration, for by a decree of God's justice, the demons are not to obtain these.[83] What is at issue, then, is the moral good, which consists in a deliberate action. Here, two aspects are to be further distinguished: the substance of the act itself; and its form, which derives from the intention of the agent. As to the substance of the act, the demons can do good, such as giving good advice. According to Henry, it is concerning the intention of the moral act that the demons cannot revert to the good. For the intention to be good, one must want the moral good for its own sake.[84] But this is not possible for the demons, as Henry tries to illustrate by this narrative:

> When the will is in its perfect freedom, once it has fully deliberated, then it hastens with corresponding efficacy to the willed object of sin and sets the end in it. Thus, when it arrives at the obstacle of its fundamental moral awareness [*synderesis*], it does not stop there, but contemptuously smashes itself against it, and there it gets blunt, so that it cannot pull itself back; it does not—nor can it—want to pull back, just as when a sharp weapon penetrates the flesh, it is blunted by the interior bones, and it cannot be pulled out.[85]

Henry thus explains demonic obstinacy by means of an irreversible corruption of the intention, which is due to the intense willing of evil. Like Aquinas, Henry hypothesizes internal determinism, but he opts for volitional rather than intellectual determinism. It is because of the thrust of the demon's free will that his intention is irreversibly corrupted, and the cognitive obstacle of *synderesis* cannot stop it because it is not able to resist the will's momentum. Thus, for Henry, a great degree of freedom is not only *compatible* with a lack of alternative possibilities but even can annul alternative possibilities, at least so far as the agent's intention is concerned. Unfortunately, Henry only describes this dynamic, without explaining it at any length.

Compared to Aquinas's intellectual determinism, Henry's volitional determinism is of a completely different order. In Henry's theory, it is not that the will's acts as such are determined to one effect, only that the intention which informs the acts is irreversibly corrupt. In other words, while in Aquinas's theory there is determinism simply speaking

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ed. A.-J. Gondras (Leuven and Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1968), 3:794–95. Peter's disputed questions are probably to be dated between 1279 and 1281; see Gondras's introduction, 1:9.

[83] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 8.11, ed. Badius, 323vY.

[84] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 8.11, ed. Badius, 323rV–vX.

[85] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* 8.11, ed. Badius, 323vX.

(and compatibilism, because he affirms the demons' freedom), in Henry's account there is only qualified determinism.

Henry's theory is not very persuasive: the "blunting" metaphor merely describes what needs explanation, rather than explaining it.

2.3. *Duns Scotus: Denial of Internal Determinism*

Duns Scotus's conception of the will as fundamentally free leads him to reject any explanation that considers the reason for demonic obstinacy to be internal to the demons. For Scotus, the only reason is external: God does not grant the demons the grace of conversion.

According to Scotus, the principal cause of the will's act is the will itself. Therefore, nothing can alter the will's mode of eliciting its act, which is contingent—after sin no less than before.[86] Scotus rejects Aquinas's intellectual determinism, because, for Scotus, the intellect is not the sufficient cause of the will's movement.[87] He rejects Henry's volitional determinism, because the freedom of the will entails that it has the power not only to act or not but also to act in different degrees of intensity. For Scotus, the freedom does not diminish at any point; if the angelic will is perfectly free in its movement toward its object, then it is also perfectly free in its rest in that object.[88]

Although critical of Henry's theory, Scotus adopts a similar method to find a solution. He distinguishes different degrees of goodness in order to determine which of these are attainable by the demons, and what corresponding badness inheres necessarily in them. Scotus is more generous than Henry in granting the demons the ability to do good and to refrain from evil. With respect to the "good of morality," Henry had distinguished between the substance and the form of the act. Henry's "moral goodness in substance" corresponds roughly to the "good from the genus" in Scotus's terminology. Like Henry and in accordance with the dominant view of the time, Scotus grants that, in the line of this degree of goodness, demons can

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[86] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 nn. 16–17, Editio Vaticana 8:79–81.

[87] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 n. 19, Editio Vaticana 8:83. According to Scotus's early teaching in Oxford, the intellect is only a partial cause of the will's act, while the will itself is another partial cause; see *Lectura* 2.25 nn. 69–70, Editio Vaticana 19:253. In his Parisian teaching, he does not even allow that the intellect is a partial cause; rather, he makes the will the total cause of its act; see *Reportatio* 2A.25, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 194r–v. The *Ordinatio* lacks distinction 2.25 (the *locus classicus* for discussions of *liberum arbitrium*). Scotus left some blank space to insert it later, which indicates that he had not definitively made up his mind about the issue.

[88] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 nn. 23–24, Editio Vaticana 8:85–86.

have good volitions, such as love of self or dislike of punishment. The only criterion for goodness in genus is that the act concern a suitable object.[89]

Henry's "moral goodness according to the form" corresponds to Scotus's "virtuous goodness or goodness from the circumstance." Henry required for this degree of goodness that an act be done with a good intention, which he considered to be impossible for the demons. Scotus thinks otherwise: the demons retain a natural inclination to the good, which allows them to engage in good acts, such as remorse about their sin or dislike of their punishment. While Scotus does not say whether they can do so with a good intention, he seems to admit that they can do so without a bad intention.[90] But more important, he advances a new hypothesis, which will be influential on William of Ockham's account of demonic obstinacy. The demonic will could simply suspend all of its acts, and therefore it is not necessary for it to will evil. Scotus bases this idea on one of his favorite quotations from Augustine: "nothing is as much in the power of the will as the will itself."[91]

Concerning meritorious goodness, Scotus goes to much greater lengths than Henry. For Scotus, the demons do not have the power to attain meritorious goodness in point of fact, because it is not in their power to obtain grace.[92] Nevertheless, in Scotus's view, it is not logically impossible for the demons to have meritorious goodness, for there is no intrinsic repugnance to grace on the side of the demons, and it is not impossible for God, by his absolute power, to give them grace. Only by God's ordained power, which conforms to the rules of justice as they are established by the divine wisdom and will, is meritorious goodness inaccessible to the demons.[93] Scotus is in agreement with Aquinas on this point.[94]

In his Parisian lectures on the *Sentences*, he presents basically the same theory, but adds a hypothesis that is worth mentioning because it prefigures Ockham's solution. According to this hypothesis, a bad angel is

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[89] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 n. 41 and n. 75, Editio Vaticana 8:94 and 111.

[90] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 nn. 67–69, Editio Vaticana 8:107–8. In the *Reportatio*, Scotus expresses uncertainty as to whether the demons could have a "completely good" act, that is, good also according to all the required circumstances, especially the intended end; see *Reportatio* 2A.7, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 150r: "... dico quod potest habere bonum actum moraliter ex genere. Sed an possit habere bonum complete, hoc est quantum ratio practica potest concludere, dubium est."

[91] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 n. 70, n. 73, and n. 75, Editio Vaticana 8:108 and 110–11; Augustine, *Retractationes* 1.22.4, CCL 57:66.

[92] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 nn. 44–45, Editio Vaticana 8:95–96.

[93] Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.7 nn. 51–54 and n. 60, Editio Vaticana 8:99–101 and 104–5.

[94] See note 78 above.

irrevocably obstinate because his deformed will-act is permanent. Scotus's point is that God himself causes the bad act so as to make sure that the will-act is truly permanent, because nothing internal to the angel, such as a habit, could necessitate the will. But under this hypothesis, God would only cause the substance of the evil act, while the deformity would derive from the will itself.[95] This is also what guarantees that the bad angel continuously experiences distress (*tristitia*).[96] Alternatively, Scotus stipulates that God's special intervention might directly secure the demons' distress. In fact, what causes distress is the dislike of something experienced, such as the fire of hell. But unless God himself directly causes the dislike, the demon's will could stop the act of dislike and, thus, stop experiencing distress. Although according to this hypothesis the act of dislike is no longer in the angel's power, it would still be a sin, because God simply continues the will in the state in which he found it when it sinned.[97]

As Scotus's theory of demonic obstinacy shows, the more intensive and extensive an author conceives the will's freedom to be, the fewer resources he has to account for the immutability of an act of the will by other means than by divine intervention. This can be observed also in Ockham's theory.

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[95] *Reportatio* 2A.7, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 150r–v: "Vel sustinendo aliam opinionem superius positam quam credo veriorem, scilicet quod obstinatus permanet in actu malo elicito ita actualiter sicut si nunc eliceretur primo, tunc oportet dicere quod ista permanentia non sit a causa intrinseca, quia nec habitus, nec quodcumque intrinsecum posset voluntatem ad hoc necessitare, quia modus causae secundae non potest determinare causam primam. Et tunc oportet dicere quod Deus influit ad substantiam actus, et inordinatio est a voluntate in se, secundum illud superius allegatum, ad quemcumque terminum creatura rationalis pervenerit, illic perpetuo manebit. Et tunc sicut Deus conservat actum elicitum bonum in bono in quo invenit ipsum, ita conservat substantiam actus in malo, et deformitas est a se."

[96] *Reportatio* 2A.7, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 150v: "... aliter non posset poni quod aliquid esset contristans effective angelum continue, quia ex apprehensione ignis non actu contristatur nisi quia habet nolle respectu eius; et si non remaneat in actu elicito deformi continue a causa extrinseca, posset dimittere nolle illius obiecti noliti, et tunc non actu contristatur."

[97] *Reportatio* 2A.7, Merton College, MS 61, fol. 150v: "Vel oporteret dicere quod Deus immediate causat tristitiam sine <nolitione> praecedente, vel quod Deus conservat <nolitionem> quantum ad substantiam actus, et utroque modo est necessitas ab extrinseco ... In illo actu continuat Deus voluntatem in quo invenit eam in termino." The readings "nolitione" and "nolitionem" are from Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, MS K ii 26, fol. 132va; Merton College, MS 61 has "volitione" and "volitionem."

2.4. *William of Ockham: God as the Total and Immediate Cause of Obstinacy*

William of Ockham begins his treatment of demonic obstinacy with a summary of Scotus's view from his Oxford lectures (*Ordinatio*). He considers Scotus's theory to be plausible, with the exception of the hypothesis admitted in that text that the demonic will could completely suspend its volitions. In a vein similar to that of Scotus in his Parisian lectures, Ockham notes that if that were the case, the demons could suspend their distress (*tristitia*), for, according to Ockham, the distress they experience is an act of the will. But in Ockham's view, the demons' punishment consists precisely in their distress, and just as they cannot evade their punishment, so they cannot be without distress.[98]

In his own account of demonic obstinacy, Ockham accepts Scotus's Oxford teaching on the freedom of the demonic will but amends the explanation of obstinacy. In order to guarantee that the demonic will will actually experience distress, Ockham presents three theses: first, that the bad angel necessarily experiences an act of the will; second, that there is an act in the bad angel that is not in his power; and third, that God causes totally and directly an act in the will of an evil angel.[99] The third thesis gives Ockham the occasion to address some delicate issues of his ethical theory.

Ockham conceives of the obstinacy of the bad angels in analogy with the confirmation of the good angels. In his theory, the acts of seeing and loving God in the intellect and will of the blessed angels have God as their total cause, without any contribution of the angelic intellect and will as partial causes.[100] Ockham holds that the obstinacy of the bad angels happens similarly:

> God causes as the total cause whatever is absolute in the act of not-wanting God and hating God . . . And as long as this act remains, the will is obstinate, such that it cannot will the opposite. And the proof that God can cause the act of hating God in the created will, as far as anything absolute in this act is concerned, is this: God can cause anything absolute without something else that is not identical with this absolute [thing]. But the act of hating God, as far as anything absolute in it is concerned, is not identical with the deformity and badness in this act; therefore, God can cause whatever

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98 William of Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, ed. Gedeon Gál and Rega Wood (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University, 1981), *Opera theologica* 5:339.

99 Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, *Opera theologica* 5:339–40.

100 Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, *Opera theologica* 5:341; 345–46.

> is absolute in the act of hating or not-wanting God, without causing any deformity or badness in the act, therefore etc.[101]

The idea that God causes only what is absolute (that is, non-relational) in an act is going to allow him, as we will see shortly, to deny that God is the cause of some moral evil.

Alternatively to the idea of God being the total cause of the demonic act of hatred, Ockham allows for the hypothesis that God is only a partial cause of the hatred of God together with the other partial cause, which is the will of the bad angels. Then, obstinacy is explained by the fact that the bad angels fail to elicit any good acts, because God collaborates with the demon's will in causing an act of hatred of God but not in causing a good act, such as love. With this alternative theory, Ockham does not abandon his general idea that the permanence of the punishment requires that God be the total cause of some acts of the demonic will. If God does not cause hatred in the angels, then he causes, for example, the loathing of punishment and the futile desire for beatitude.[102]

Ockham's theory of obstinacy has significant implications for his ethical theory. He spells these out in responding to objections. Does God sin by being a partial cause of the demons' hatred of God and by refusing to be a partial cause of their love of God (according to the second hypothesis)? God does not, according to Ockham, because God has no obligations toward anyone, and therefore it is impossible for God to do something he must not do, or not to do something he must do.[103] Is it possible for God to be the total cause of hatred (according to the first hypothesis), even though the very notion of hatred involves badness and deformity, in the same way as Aristotle spoke about badness being attached to the notions of adultery and theft?[104] For Ockham, considering whatever is absolute in acts such as hatred, adultery, and theft, they can be caused by God, because they imply nothing bad. The only badness that is found in them derives from their relation to God's commands: as a matter of fact, divine precepts prohibit them. If God commanded these acts, then they would not only be done without sin, but even meritoriously. Yet, in that case, they would not be called by the names of hatred, adultery, and

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101 Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, *Opera theologica* 5:342.
102 Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, *Opera theologica* 5:343–44.
103 Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, *Opera theologica* 5:343.
104 Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, *Opera theologica* 5:347, citing *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.6. 1107a9–10.

theft because these names have the connotation of falling under a divine prohibition.[105]

As to the freedom experienced in the state of obstinacy, Ockham considers it—not surprisingly—to be very limited. God's total causality in producing the act of hatred is not compatible with the demons' freedom. They only enjoy a limited freedom with regard to those acts that are independent from acts caused entirely by God. For example, the demons are free to tempt human beings.[106]

Conclusion

The two issues considered in this chapter, the sin and the obstinacy of the demons, highlight two cases of intentional agency at opposite ends of the incompatibilist-compatibilist spectrum: on the one hand, a radically free choice among alternative possibilities; on the other hand, an act that completely lacks alternative possibilities.

The scenario of the angelic choice sets up the issue of free decision in its purest terms, for as the unprecedented sin of flawlessly created intellectual natures, it cannot be traced to the influence of bad habits or intense passions, but must be seen as originating only in intellect and will. Clarifying this relationship is immensely important for the understanding of human free decision, for although humans might never act apart from habitual and affective inclinations, their intentional acts cannot be reduced to the vector sum of forces that derive from habits and passions. Instead, intentional acts in themselves are essentially acts that spring from intellect and will, that is, from desire informed by reason—whether they are conditioned by habits and passions, like human acts, or not, like the angelic choice. At bottom, the issue is whether sinning comes down to making a mistake that one would have avoided if one had known better. In this case, sin should be considered a mishap, rather than a wicked

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[105] Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, *Opera theologica* 5:352–53. Elsewhere, while allowing that God by his absolute power can command a rational creature not to love him, Ockham argues that it is impossible to observe this command, because either way—whether one does or does not observe it—one loves God; see *Quodl.* 3.14, ed. Joseph C. Wey (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University, 1980), *Opera theologica* 9:256–57. For discussion, see Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of Its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies 1999), 528–33; and Marilyn McCord Adams, "Ockham on Will, Nature, and Morality," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, ed. Paul Vincent Spade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 245–72, at 257–62.

[106] Ockham, *Reportatio* 2.15, *Opera theologica* 5:344–45.

deed that deserves punishment. Instead, for the authors considered in this chapter, to sin is purely and simply to make an evil choice when it was possible to make a good choice. If it is not due to lack of better knowledge that one does evil, then the question is why someone might do so. As the case of angelic sin shows, the question of the motivation to do evil can be answered to an extent, but not fully explained. Despite different emphases, voluntarists and intellectualists inevitably arrive at this same conclusion. One may be able to identify the reason that motivated Lucifer to sin, but one cannot explain why he sinned rather than not, or why he sinned but the archangels Gabriel and Michael did not. The *mysterium iniquitatis*, the mystery of what makes a person choose evil when it was possible to choose good, remains unsolved.

The irreversibility of the evil choice of the demons highlights the fact that the degree to which alternative possibilities are available now to an individual may be conditioned by previous choices. Aquinas and Henry give a philosophical explanation of obstinacy by positing that the demons' choice carried so much weight that a single choice had a permanent effect. In a less radical way, this phenomenon is observable among humans: often we commit ourselves to the stances we have taken, and we are not easily convinced to change. Although Aquinas and Henry do not explain obstinacy by means of a habit, their account echoes Aristotle, who seems to think that humans can attain such a degree of vicious habit that they can no longer return to virtue.[107] Scotus and Ockham, in contrast, think that nothing can eliminate the will's freedom to choose, and hence they have recourse to a theological account of demonic obstinacy: God refused the grace of conversion or even caused their sinful act (although not the badness of the act).

As theologians who employ philosophical methods as far as the limits of human reason allow, the Scholastics were compelled to address scenarios of intentional action that transcend the domain of the observable, but that are still within the domain of the conceivable. In clarifying how a perfect intellectual nature can do evil and what might preclude it from reverting to the good, the scholastic theories of free decision develop a nuance and sophistication that still stand out today.

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[107] Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.5.1114a12–21; 7.8.1150b32.

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